Shakespeare (W.) 7

KING JOHN,

AN

HISTORICAL TRAGEDY,

ALTERED FROM SHAKESPEARE,

AS IT WAS ACTED

AT READING SCHOOL,

FOR THE

SUBSCRIPTION TO THE NAVAL PILLAR,

TO BE ERECTED

IN HONOR OF THE NAVAL VICTORIES

OF THE PRESENT WAR.

READING:

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MESSRS. BREMNER, PRIDDEN, RICHARDSONS,

AND ROBINSONS.

1809.

BRITISH MUSEUM

TO THE

RIGHT HONORABLE

HENRY ADDINGTON,

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

AND

HIGH STEWARD OF THE BOROUGH OF READING.

SIR,

THE liberal patronage, with which you have encouraged and dignified the annual exhibition of my pupils, demands my most grateful acknowledgments. Yet these sentiments alone, however powerful, would not have induced me to inscribe this Play to You, if I had known a person, whose public exertions and private virtues

virtues I held in higher estimation. I am not apprehensive that these expressions will subject me to the imputation of flattery: You know me too well, I trust, to suspect me of uttering a language foreign to my heart. With this persuasion, I intreat you to accept this testimony of my gratitude; together with the assurance of the profound respect and sincere esteem, with which I have the honor to be,

SIR,

Your most obedient,

And faithful humble Servant,

R. VALPY.

READING, *Dec.* 9, 1809.

ADVERTISEMENT.

WHEN the Editor formed the deſign of introducing the Play of *King John* on his claſſical Stage, he procured CIBBER's *Papal Tyranny*, with a view of adopting ſome part of his plan and ſtyle. On the peruſal, he found two great obſtacles to his wiſhes. CIBBER's object, during the rebellion in 1745, was to paint the character of the Pope's Legate in the blackeſt colors, and to darken the principles of the Romiſh Church with circumſtances of horror, which might increaſe the indignation of the people of England againſt them. In the preſent times, when the ſituation of the Pope had become a ſubject of commiſeration to the Chriſtian world, the aim of the Editor was to ſoften the features of Papal Tyranny, as far as hiſtorical evidence would permit him.

He alſo wiſhed to preſerve all the fine paſſages of SHAKESPEARE: CIBBER had ſcarcely retained a line of the great original. The more he compared *King John* with *Papal Tyranny*, the leſs he found himſelf inclined to depart from SHAKESPEARE, and to adhere to CIBBER. He wiſhed to correct and modernize the verſification of the former, whenever he could do it without offending the ears or the taſte of his admirers: the latter had adopted his worſt metrical irregularities, without the compenſation of thoſe noble flights of genius, which ſoar above the rules of common criticiſm. CIBBER ſucceeded in his alteration of

Richard

Richard III, becauſe he collected a Cento of SHAKESPEARE'S expreſſions and ſpeeches. Of the ſtyle of his *Papal Tyranny* a ſpecimen has been accidentally given in a note, page 77. Some few lines, however, have been taken from it; but that part of the plan, which is common to both, ſuch as the omiſſion of the Firſt Act of the Original, was in reality determined before CIBBER'S Play had been ſeen.

For the imperfections of the reſt of the alterations, particularly for thoſe paſſages, which relate to the invaſions of France and of England, the preſent Editor is reſponſible. He truſts that thoſe ſentiments are not inconſiſtent with the ſituation of the characters; but that they are more naturally introduced than ſome of thoſe, which have been lately admired, in public theatres, by the loyalty, with which the goodneſs of Providence has inſpired the hearts of his Countrymen.

Since theſe ſheets have been ſent to the preſs, the Play of *King John* has been brought out on the London Stage. Whether his attempt has been the cauſe of the revival, or no, the Editor congratulates the public on the ſucceſſion of the father of the Engliſh Drama and the maſter of the human heart to the *Pizarros* and *Joannas* of the German theatre. He muſt, at the ſame time, be permitted to expreſs his aſtoniſhment that the indecencies of the Firſt Act ſhould be tolerated by a Britiſh audience, in this age of moral refinement, in the reign of a PRINCE, who diſplays an exemplary deteſtation of every thing, that is not chaſte in ſentiment, and pure in expreſſion.

PROLOGUE,

(Written by H. J. PYE, Esq.)

Spoken by MR. VALPY, *in the Uniform of the* READING ASSOCIATION, *a part of the* BERKSHIRE VOLUNTEERS *reviewed by* HIS MAJESTY, *on* BULMARSH HEATH.

TO-NIGHT our ſcene from Britiſh annals, ſhews
How Britiſh warriours brav'd their country's foes;
Whether their hardy bands with martial toil
Dar'd the proud Gaul upon his native ſoil,
And by his ravag'd plains and proſtrate tow'rs
Led in triumphant march their conqu'ring pow'rs,
Or on his own inſulted fields, defied
The whelming deluge of Invaſion's tide.

The Muſe Dramatic, with an angel's tongue,
Proclaims the ills from civil Diſcord ſprung.
When bound by Union, ENGLAND's heroes ſtand,
Dread of each wave-worn ſhore and hoſtile land;
When warp'd by Faction,—ſunk, diſmay'd,—they mourn
Their faireſt wreaths by foreign inroad torn.——
Then be this truth on ev'ry ENGLISH breaſt
In adamantine characters impreſs'd:
"That ENGLAND never did, and never ſhall"
Bow to a victor foe's inglorious thrall,
Till her own ſons, ſeduc'd by Faction's ſound,
Aim at her heart the parricidal wound.

Hail ſcenes of happier omen!—ENGLAND draws
(Warm in their Monarch's and their Country's cauſe,)
From rural toil, and life's domeſtic charms,
Her native ſwains to voluntary arms.

PROLOGUE.

Ye heaths of BULMARSH, hail! for you have ſeen
Th'embattled Sons of BERKSHIRE tread your green;
When ev'ry hill and dale and verdant plain
Pour'd in refulgent arms a gallant train,
From WINDSOR's royal tow'rs, that ſtand on high,
Illuſtrious ſeat of blazon'd Chivalry,
To the green Vale where ISIS' waters flow,
And, diſtant FARINGDON, thy humbler brow.
Each manly boſom kindling with delight,
Proud to appear in GEORGE's fav'ring ſight.

And ſee the gen'rous Patriot, who preſides
O'er BRITAIN's Senate, and its Councils guides,
Now ſhining in the radiant van, prepar'd
Thoſe rights, which Freedom gave, by arms to guard!

Then BRITAIN, launch thy Navies on the main,
Send forth thy warriours to the hoſtile plain,
To reſcue from Oppreſſion's iron hand
BATAVIA's ſhores and EGYPT's wat'ry ſtrand,
Since with united zeal thy valiant ſwains
Stand firm protectors of their native plains:
While BRITAIN's Monarch, by a tyrant fear'd,
By Virtue lov'd, by Liberty rever'd,
Sees his triumphant banner wide unfurl'd,
The bleſt Palladium of a reſcued World!

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

King John, - - - -	Mr. JOLLIFFE.
Arthur, *Duke of* Bretagne, *ſon of* Geoffrey, *elder brother of King* John, -	Mr. A. J. VALPY
Earl of Pembroke, - - -	Mr. AMES.
Earl of Saliſbury, - - -	Mr. TUCKER.
Earl of Eſſex, - - - -	Mr. PELLET.
Hubert du Bourg, *Chamberlain to the King*,	Mr. BRIGHT.
Falconbridge, *natural ſon of King* Richard I.	Mr. JOY.
Philip II, *called* Auguſtus, *King of* France,	Mr. DOBREE.
Lewis, *Prince of* France, - -	Mr. VALPY.
Duke of Auſtria, - - - - -	Mr. BRAZIER.
Cardinal Pandulph, *Legate to Pope* Innocent III. - - - -	Mr. STEVENS.
Melun, *a French Lord*, - - -	Mr. LOVEDAY.
Chatillon, *Ambaſſador from* France *to King* John,	Mr. GLEDSTANES.
Governor of Angers, - - -	Mr. LORING.
Conſtance, *mother of* Arthur, - -	Mr. CHARRETIE.
Blanch, *daughter of* Eleanor *the ſiſter of King* John, *and of* Alphonſo IX, *King of* Caſtille, - - -	Mr. EYRE.

Attendants, Meſſengers, Citizens of Angers, Soldiers, Executioners, &c.

SCENE,—*during the three firſt Acts in* France, *during the two laſt in* England.

KING JOHN.

ACT I.

SCENE.—*Before Angers.**

KING PHILIP, LEWIS, ARTHUR, AUSTRIA, CONSTANCE.

King Philip.

SWEET is the office of humanity!
What is the uſe of pow'r, but to relieve
The pangs of the diſtreſs'd, to curb the proud,
To lift the ſword of juſtice, and to break
Oppreſſion's bond? The gentle exerciſe
Of mercy and benevolence exalts
A man into an angel.—Royal Arthur!
Dear injur'd Prince! thou lawful heir of England!
In thy defence I feel ſupreme delight.
My crown ſits lightly on my brow, while Heav'n
Gilds the fair proſpect of this pious war.

* The incidents, with which the Play opens, muſt be placed in the beginning of the year 1200.

Behold theſe formidable bands, that ſhine
In plum'd array, to vindicate thy cauſe,
And ſnatch the ſceptre from a proud uſurper.

Arthur. O godlike Philip! O my more than father!
That I have life, was nature's gift: from you
A greater, nobler bleſſing I receive.
But if in mercy gracious Heav'n ordain
That you ſhall ſeat me on fair England's throne,
Then ſhall my thanks be worthy of your love.

Conſtance. O take a mother's thanks, a widow's thanks!
Receive a tribute Heav'n itſelf accepts.
Theſe tears of joy, that flow from gratitude,
Are balmy bleſſings to a heart like your's.

K. Phil. Fair relict of renown'd Plantagenet!
Compoſe thy heart, and reſt thy cares with us.
Thy wrongs are ours. Our Barons are in arms:
A thouſand ſwords leap from their valiant ſides,
Protecting innocence. This gallant Duke
Has ſpread his colors, boy, in thy behalf,
Shadowing thy right beneath his wings of war.
Embrace him, Arthur, give him welcome hither!

Arthur. I give you welcome with a pow'rleſs hand,
But with a heart full of unſtained love.

Auſtria. Upon thy cheek I lay this zealous kiſs,
As ſeal to this indenture of my love;

That

That to my home I will no more return,
Till Angers, and thy Provinces in France,
Together with that pale, that white-fac'd ſhore,
Whoſe foot ſpurns back the Ocean's roaring tides;
Ev'n 'till that England, hedg'd in with the main,
That water-walled bulwark, ſtill ſecure
And confident from foreign purpoſes,
Salute thee for her king.

Lewis. We'll brave all fear.
The aid of heav'n is theirs, who lift their ſwords
In ſuch a juſt a charitable war.
Come then, to work!—our efforts ſhall be bent
Againſt the brows of this reſiſting town.
We'll call our men of ſkilful diſcipline,
To cull the plots of beſt advantages.

Conſt. Stay for an anſwer to your embaſſy,
Leſt unadvis'd you ſtain your ſwords with blood—
I ſee Chatillon comes: he yet may bring
That right in peace, which here we urge in war.
Elſe we may ſore repent each drop of blood,
That hot, raſh haſte ſo indirectly ſhed.

Enter CHATILLON.

K. Phil. Now ſay, Chatillon, to our juſt demand
Is Peace, or War, the anſwer England ſends?

Chat. My liege, in ſtrict diſcharge of our commiſſion,
In royal Philip's name, and Arthur's right,

With ſolemn call, we urg'd him to reſign
The crown of England, with its fair dominions—
That crown, which faction, favor'd by ſucceſs,
From lineal blood had forcibly withheld.
To this King John, in angry mood, replied:
" Bear my defiance to thy daring King:
Be thou as lightning in the eyes of France,
For ere thou canſt report, I will be there!"

K. Phil. Here have we war for war, and blood for blood!
And deſolation hovers o'er theſe plains.

Chat. Then turn your forces from this paltry ſiege,
And draw them up againſt a mightier foe.
King John is landed, and comes ſtraight to Angers,
All fluſh'd and confident in ſtrength and ſpirit.
The volunteers of England are come forth,
Like creſted champions to a tournament,
That tir'd of youth's gay paſtimes, hither come
To reap fair honor in the fields of war.
With theſe a ſplendid train of beauties move,
Who form the Court of Lady Blanch of Spain.
In brief, a braver choice of dauntleſs ſpirits,
Than Engliſh bottoms now have wafted o'er,
Never yet floated on the ſwelling tide,
To bring deſtruction on a Chriſtian ſhore.

K. Phil. How much unlook'd for is this expedition!

Lewis. Well, be it unexpected: then the more
We muſt awake our ſpirits for defence.
True courage riſes as occaſion preſſes.

(Drums beat.)

The interruption of their churliſh drums
Cuts off more circumſtance: they are at hand
To parley or to fight; therefore prepare!

Enter KING JOHN, LORDS, *and* ATTENDANTS.

K. John. Peace be to France! if France in peace permit
Our juſt poſſeſſion of our own domains.
If not, bleed France, and peace aſcend to Heav'n!
While we, God's wrathful agent, ſhall correct
That proud contempt, which opes the ſluice of war.

K. Phil. Peace be to England! if her ſons more juſt
Shall own the title of her lawful King.—
Look here upon thy brother Geoffrey's face.
Theſe eyes, theſe brows were moulded out of his.
Here is his abſtract; and the hand of time
Shall draw this brief into as large a volume.
He was the heir to Cœur de Lion's crown;
And ſo is Arthur: In the name of God,
How comes it then, that thou art call'd a King,
When living blood is beating in theſe temples,
Deſtin'd to wear the crown uſurp'd by thee!

K. John. From whom haſt thou this great commiſſion, France?

To

To judge the rights of Crowns, and ſummon Kings,
Like criminals impeach'd, to thy tribunal?

K. Phil. From that ſupernal Judge, who rules the world.
He arms this breaſt with ſtrong authority
To look into the blots and ſtains of right!
That Judge has made me guardian to this boy,
Under whoſe warrant I impeach thy wrong,
And who gives me commiſſion to chaſtiſe it.

K. John. Preſumptuous man! talk'ſt thou of injur'd right,
Who wouldſt thyſelf uſurp the pow'r of Heav'n?
Muſt I have Philip's ſanction to my title?

K. Phil. And what can ſet aſide Prince Arthur's claim?
Is he not then thy elder brother's ſon?
What right haſt thou to plead?

K. John. King Richard's will*.
I am my brother's ſucceſſor adopted:
A choice confirm'd by England's general voice.

K. Phil.

* Richard, going to the holy war, declared his nephew, Arthur, Duke of Bretagne, his ſucceſſor, and ſet aſide his brother John, who was younger than Geoffrey, the father of that Prince. But John afterwards engaged the Engliſh Barons to declare in favor of his ſucceſſion; and Richard, on his return, took no ſteps to ſecure his former ſettlement. He even named, by his laſt *will*, his brother John heir to all his dominions; whether he thought Arthur too young to aſſert his claim againſt John's party; or whether he was inſtigated by the ambitious Eleanor, the Queen-

K. Phil. King Richard's will! thy mother's artifice,
Who, to ſecure ſucceſſion of her pow'r,
Seduc'd thy brother to prefer her minion,
That under thee, the creature of her pride,
She ſtill might bend the kingdom to her will.—
Then hear me, John! this is the ſum of all:
England and Ireland, Anjou, Maine, Touraine,
In right of Arthur I here claim of thee:
Wilt thou reſign them, and lay down thy arms?

K. John. My life as ſoon. France, I defy thy pow'r!—
Arthur of Bretagne, yield thee to my hand;
And out of my dear love, I'll give thee more
Than e'er the boaſting force of France can win.

Lewis. Poor boy, he weeps!

Conſt. to K. John. Now ſhame upon you for it!
The wrongs he ſuffers, and your artful ſmiles
Draw thoſe heav'n-moving pearls from his poor eyes.
Ay, with theſe cryſtal beads Heav'n ſhall be brib'd
To do him juſtice, and revenge on you!

K. John.

Queen-mother, who hated Conſtance, mother to the young Duke, and who not only dreaded the influence, which that Princeſs would regain during the reign of her ſon, but wiſhed to ſecure her own authority. On the Continent greater reſpect was paid to the right of ſucceſſion, and the Barons of the Engliſh Provinces in France declared in favor of Arthur, and claimed the protection of the French monarch. HUME's *Hiſt.* Ch. x.

K. John. No more: theſe inſults tempt my patience. Hence,
Forth to the field! diſpute our title there!
Deciſive war, that mocks all vain pretence,
Shall prove the victor draws his right from Heav'n.

K. Phil. Then Heav'n for us! and Angers be the umpire!
Let trumpets ſummon hither from the walls
The citizens of Angers: let them ſay
Of John, or Arthur, who ſhall be their King!—
(Trumpets ſound from each ſide.)

Enter GOVERNOR *of* ANGERS *and* CITIZENS.

Gov. Who is it, that has warn'd us from the town?

K. Phil. 'Tis France for England.

K. John. England for itſelf.

K. Philip. Behold this royal youth, your lawful lord,
In whoſe juſt cauſe offenſive war, conſtrain'd
By hoſpitable zeal, and ſacred honor,
Now brings her dreadful engines to your walls.
Then pay that duty, which you truly owe,
To this young Prince!—but if you ſcorn our offer,
'Tis not the girdle of your old fac'd walls
Can ſcreen you from our meſſengers of war.
Tho' all theſe Engliſh, and their vaunting pride,
Were harbour'd in their rude circumference.
Then tell us, will you call this Prince your lord?

Or

Or ſhall we give the ſignal to our rage,
And ſtalk in blood to our poſſeſſion?

K. John. Be not deluded, faithful men of Angers.
This pow'r of France, that claims in Arthur's right,
Like the fierce falcon, clad in turtle plumes,
Would tempt you forth, poor unſuſpecting doves,
To gorge ambition with your liberties.
Her wrathful engines, ready to pour forth
Their iron indignation 'gainſt your walls,
Had, but for our approach, wide havoc made,
Ruſhing, with bloody pow'r, upon your peace.
Acknowledge then your friends, kind citizens,
Open your gates, and give your king admittance.

Gov. Too long this bleeding land has felt the rage
Of wild contention, and of doubtful claims.
Your civil broils have doom'd theſe provinces
To wide-ſpread deſolation: faint and wearied,
We call for ſafety, and we ſigh for peace.
Under a change of maſters have we groan'd,
Till loyalty itſelf has loſt its object.
No other form of government we own,
But ſacred Monarchy! The people's voice
Demands a lawful Sov'reign!—let him come
Sanction'd by France and England; let him bring
Security within, and peace without,
We'll wear him in our hearts; but 'till that time,
Our gates are barr'd againſt the world in arms.

K. John. Then God forgive the ſins of all thoſe ſouls,
That to their everlaſting reſidence,
Before the dews of evening fall, ſhall fly,
In the deciſive conflict of this day!

K. Phil. Amen, amen! mount, chevaliers, to arms!

[*Exeunt French and Engliſh on different ſides. Trumpets ſound on each ſide to horſe.*]

Fight. Excurſions.

Enter KING JOHN, LADY BLANCH, FALCONBRIDGE, &c. *(Trumpets).*

K. John. Now, faireſt Blanch, the blood has ceas'd to flow.
Remove thy terrors: thy ſweet innocence
Might charm the wild barbarian into ſmiles,
And bid contending nations be at peace.
Th' approaching conference may heal our wounds.

Blanch. Alas, what happineſs might Kings enjoy,
Could honor mark the bounds of their ambition.

K. John. Fear not, fair Princeſs! in a King of England,
Honor's the great incentive, that conducts him
In peace to juſtice, and in war to glory.

(Enter

(*Enter from the other ſide* KING PHILIP, LEWIS *and Attendants.—From the town enter* GOVERNOR *and Citizens*).

Now reſtleſs France, haſt thou more blood to loſe?
Have not theſe men of Angers, from their walls,
Beheld the havoc, which our arms have made?

K. Phil. And have they not ſeen conqueſt in the air
Equally hov'ring o'er the hoſts of France?
Do they not witneſs our empurpled hands
Dy'd in the ſlaughter of the Engliſh foe?

Gov. Princes, with equal ſorrow have we ſeen
The fatal waſte of your contending pow'rs.
Blood has bought blood, and blows have anſwer'd blows,
Strength match'd with ſtrength, and pow'r confronted pow'r.
One muſt prove greater in the field or council.

K. Phil. Now, Angers, hear me! by this hand I ſwear,
That ſways the land this climate overlooks,
Before we will lay down our juſt-borne arms,
We will proclaim Prince Arthur as your Lord,
Or add a royal number to the dead,
Gracing the ſcroll, that tells the loſs in war,
With ſlaughter coupled to the name of Kings.

Fal. Ha, majeſty! how high thy glory tow'rs,
When the rich blood of Kings is ſet on fire!

Ah, ſee! death lines his murd'rous chaps with ſteel,
And now he banquets on the fleſh of men,
In undetermin'd diff'rences of kings.
Why ſtand your royal brows thus in amazement?
Cry havoc, kings! back to the waſteful field,
You equal pow'rs, you fiery-kindled ſpirits!
Let the deſtruction of one part confirm
The other's peace: 'till then, blows, blood, and death!

K. Phil. Speak, citizens, for England; who's your King?

Gov. The King of England, when his title's clear.

K. Phil. Know him in us, that here maintain his right!

K. John. In us, that ſtand in our own perſon here!

Gov. A greater power than you denies all this.
And 'till it be undoubted, we ſhall lock
Our former ſcruple in our ſtrong barr'd gates.

Fal. And ſhall theſe vaſſals, lying at your mercy,
Preſume thus to ſet bounds to royal right!
If you are Kings, reſent this inſolence.
Be friends awhile, and both conjointly bend
Your works of ſharp deſtruction on theſe walls,
Till their aſſailing blows have batter'd down
The flinty ribs of this contemptuous city,

Ev'n

Ev'n till unfenc'd and flaming deſolation
Leave them as naked as the barren air.
Then part your mingled colors once again,
'Till fortune on one ſide ſhall chuſe her minion,
To whom in favor ſhe ſhall give the day,
And kiſs him with a glorious victory!

K. John. Now, by the ſky, that hangs above our heads,
I like it well. France ſhall we knit our pow'rs,
And lay this city level with the ground?

K. Phil. Let it be ſo. Say, where will you aſſault?

K. John. We from the Weſt will pour deſtruction down.

Auſtria. I from the North.

K. Phil. Our archers from the South
Shall ſend a ſhow'r of weapons on this town.

Falc. (Aſide.) O prudent diſcipline! from North to South,
Auſtria and France ſhoot in each other's face!

Gov. Hear us, great Kings! ſuſpend a while your rage.
Liſten to terms of peace, and ſave your ſubjects:
And win this town without a ſtroke or wound.

K. John. Speak on, with favor; we are bent to hear.

Gov.

Gov. The firſt, the deareſt gift to man on earth,
Woman, the ſource of harmony and love,
Shall give you peace. The Lady Blanch of Spain
Is near to England. Look upon the years
Of Lewis the Dauphin, and that lovely maid.
If courtly love ſhould go in queſt of beauty,
Where ſhould he find it fairer than in Blanch?
If zealous love ſhould go in ſearch of virtue,
Where ſhould he find it purer than in Blanch?
If proud ambition ſeek a match of birth,
Whoſe veins can beat with more illuſtrious blood?
Such as ſhe is in beauty, virtue, birth,
Is not the Dauphin worth ſo rich a prize?
This union ſhall do more than darts and ſtones.
At this auſpicious marriage, ſhall the town
With ſwift impatience open wide its gates
To give you entrance: but without this match,
The raging billows are not half ſo deaf,
Lions more confident, mountains and rocks
More free from motion; no, not death itſelf
In mortal fury half ſo peremptory,
As we to keep this city!

Lewis. Your propoſal,
Soft as the harp, that tunes the minſtrel's lay*,
Has lull'd each jarring ſtring of war to peace,
And

* Almoſt all the Poets were Muſicians, commonly called *Minſtrels*, and ſung their verſes to the muſic of their *harps*.
HENRY's *Hiſtory of Britain*. B. III. c. v. ſec. 2.

And turn'd my ſoul to rapture. Such a prize
Millions of conquer'd cities cannot buy.

Gov. Turn then, great Pow'rs, your hoſtile rage to peace!
And, like indulgent heav'n, from low'ring clouds
Pour down your bleſſings on a grateful people.

K. Phil. Theſe bleſſings, ſon, are in the gift of England.

Lewis. Thus then to England, for the general weal,
Suppliant I bend my knee, and ſue for peace.
This knee, which never could to int'reſt bow,
May bend with honor, at the call of love.
O plead my paſſion to the Lady Blanch!
My heart is hers—my gratitude be yours!

K. John. If thou, young Prince, with mutual ardor warm'd,
Canſt in this book of beauty read, I love,
Her dowry ſhall weigh equal with a Queen's.
The Provinces of Anjou, Maine, Touraine,
And twenty thouſand marks of Engliſh coin*,
Shall gild her bridal bed, and make her rich
In titles, honors, and in high promotions,

As

* Dr. Henry calculates that the *mark*, a denomination of money, but not a real coin, was equal in weight of ſilver to 1l. 17s. 9d. of our preſent money. It weighed two thirds of a pound. *Hiſtory of Britain*, B. II. c. vi.

As ſhe in beauty, education, blood,
Holds hand with any princeſs of the world.

Lewis. O lovely Princeſs, hear a ſuppliant's plea!
If as a Prince I ſue, theſe royal Pow'rs
Urge our compliance with the gen'ral good.
If as a lover, how ſhall I addreſs thee?
Can I, in one ſhort moment, aſk for hope?

Blanch. My uncle's wiſh in this reſpect is mine.
If he ſee aught in you, that moves his liking,
I can with eaſe tranſlate it to my will.
The public welfare ties the nuptial bond,
And my heart ratifies the nation's choice.

K. Phil. Now, citizens of Angers, ope your gates,
And reap the harveſt, which yourſelves have ſown!
We'll inſtant ſolemnize th' auſpicious marriage*,
Which bids the feuds of civil diſcord ceaſe †,
And founds on private bliſs—the public good.
(*Exeunt into the town with trumpets and ſhouts.*)

* The ceremony, according to Roger de Hoveden, took place at Purmor in Normandy, May 23, 1200.

† This treaty may give an idea of the form of ſimilar conventions in thoſe times. Foreign Princes were not then called upon to guarantee a treaty of peace. A certain number of Barons on each ſide were ſureties for the performance of the conditions on the part of their Sovereign. Thus when we ſee them in arms againſt their King, it is often in conſequence of his violation of a treaty, which they had ſolemnly ſworn to preſerve.
DANIEL, *Hiſt. de France.* (4to. Paris, 1755.) Tome iv. p. 121.

Manet FALCONBRIDGE.

Mad world! mad kings! mad compoſition!
John, to ſtop Arthur's title in the whole,
Has willingly departed with a part.
And France, whoſe armour conſcience buckled on,
Whom zeal and charity brought to the field,
As God's own ſoldier—whiſper'd in the ear
With that ſame purpoſe-changer, that ſly devil;
That broker, that ſtill breaks the pate of faith;
That daily break-vow; he that wins of all,
Of kings, of beggars, old men, young men, maids;
That ſmooth-fac'd courtier, fair commodity,
Commodity, the bias of the world,—
Has tamely ſhrunk from his determin'd aid,
From a reſolv'd and honorable war,
To a moſt baſe, and vile-concluded peace!—
But why rail I at this commodity?
Only becauſe he has not woo'd me yet.
Not that I have the pow'r to clutch my hand,
When his fair angels would ſalute my palm,
But that my hand, as unattempted yet,
Like a poor beggar, rails againſt the rich.
Well, while I am a beggar, I will rail,
And ſay, there is no ſin, but to be rich.
But when I'm rich, my virtue then ſhall be,
To ſay there is no vice like beggary.
Since Kings break faith upon commodity,
Gain, be my Lord, for I will worſhip thee! *Exit.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

King Philip's Pavilion.

Enter CONSTANCE, ARTHUR *and* SALISBURY.

Conſtance.

GONE to be married! gone to ſwear a peace!
False blood to falſe blood join'd!—Gone to be friends!
Shall Lewis have Blanch, and Blanch theſe Provinces?
It is not ſo:—tell o'er thy tale again.
I hope I may not truſt thee; for thy word
Is but the vain breath of a common man.
Thou art miſtaken: I do not believe thee:
I have a King's oath to the contrary.
Ah, ſpare my feelings! do not fright me thus;
For I am weak, and capable of fears,
A woman, trembling at each breath of danger,
Oppreſs'd with wrongs, and therefore full of ſorrows.
Why doſt thou look ſo ſadly on my ſon?
What means that hand upon thy heaving breaſt?
Why holds thy eye that gliſt'ning dew of grief?
Are theſe ſad ſigns confirmers of thy words?

Saliſ. Would you had room for doubt! My words are true.—

Have

Have patience, Madam! hope for better days.

Conſt. Go bid the gaſping wretch, with broken limbs,
Extended on the wheel, to hope for life,
Then bid me hope!

Arthur. Since 'tis the will of Heav'n,
I do beſeech you, Madam, be content.

Conſt. If thou, that bid'ſt me be content, wert grim,
Ugly, deform'd, offenſive to the ſight,
Still, as my child, my heart would feel thy wrongs.
But thou art fair,* and at thy birth, dear boy,
Nature and fortune join'd to make thee great.
Of nature's gifts thou may'ſt with lilies boaſt,
And with the half-blown roſe;—but fortune's falſe,
Baſely corrupted and eſtrang'd from thee.
And can I be content, when thou, my child,
Art wrong'd, betray'd, abandon'd to the world!

Saliſ. Madam, the Kings, with juſt affection mov'd,
Offer their friendſhip, and entreat your preſence.

Conſt. Perfidious offer!—No, I will not go.
I will inſtruct my ſorrows to be proud.
For grief is proud, and dignifies the mourner.—

* *Impube corpus, quale poſſet impia*
Mollire pectora. HOR.

He was a beautiful young Prince, of the faireſt expectation, in whom the ſeeds of virtue were already ſeen to unfold themſelves.

D'ARGENTRE, *Hiſtoire de Bretagne*, l. iii. c. 75.

To me, and to my venerable grief
Let Kings aſſemble; for my grief's ſo great,
That no ſupporter but the huge, firm earth
Can hold it up. Here I and Sorrow ſit:
Here is my throne; let Kings come bow to it!
(Throws herſelf on the ground)

Enter KING PHILIP, KING JOHN, FALCONBRIDGE *and* AUSTRIA.

K. Phil. 'Tis true, my Royal Brother, and this day
Ever in France ſhall be kept feſtival;
To ſolemnize this day, the glorious ſun
Stays in his courſe, and plays the Alchymiſt,
Turning with ſplendor of his precious eye
The meagre clods of earth to glitt'ring gold.
The yearly courſe, that brings about this day,
Shall never ſee it but a feſtival.

Conſt. *(Riſing ſuddenly and coming forward.)*
A day accurſt, and not a feſtival!
What has this day deſerv'd, to be kept ſacred?
This day of ſhame, oppreſſion, perjury!
Let nothing proſper, that is done this day,
But faith itſelf to hollow falſehood change!

K. Phil. By Heaven, Lady, you ſhall have no cauſe
To curſe the fair proceedings of this day.
Have I not pawn'd to you my Majeſty?

Conſt.

Conſt. You have beguil'd me with a counterfeit,
Reſembling Majeſty. You are forſworn.
You came in arms to ſpill my en'my's blood,
But now you join, and fortify his cauſe.—
Arm, arm, you Heav'ns, againſt theſe perjur'd Kings,
A widow cries; be huſband to me, Heav'n!
Let not the hours of this ungodly day
Be worn away in peace; but ere ſun-ſet,
Let diſcord riſe 'twixt theſe perfidious Kings!
Hear me, O hear me!

Auſtria. Lady, Conſtance, peace!

Conſt. War, war! no peace! peace is to me a war.
O Auſtria! thy diſloyal deeds diſgrace
That bloody ſpoil:*—thou ſlave, thou wretch, thou coward!
Thou little valiant, great in villainy!
Thou ever ſtrong upon the ſtronger ſide!

Thou

* It is here ſuppoſed that the Duke of Auſtria, who had thrown King Richard into priſon, and ſtripped him of his trophies, clothed himſelf in the ſkin of a Lion, which his valiant priſoner had ſlain. Thus the confuſion of the characters of Leopold and Lymoges, and of the events of 1192 and 1199, in Shakeſpeare, is avoided. This explains the cauſe of the animoſity of Falconbridge, the natural ſon of Richard I. to the Duke of Auſtria, and removes Mr. Tyrwhitt's objection to the introduction of ſome following ſpeeches: *Methinks this trophy*, &c. See JOHNSON and STEEVENS's *Shakeſpeare*, 4th Edit. Vol. viii. page 80.

Thou fortune's champion! thou cold-blooded
ſlave:
Haſt thou not ſpoke like thunder on my ſide?
Been ſworn my ſoldier, bidding me depend
Upon thy ſtars, thy fortune and thy ſtrength?
And doſt thou now fall over to my foes?
Thou wear a lion's hide!—doff it for ſhame,
And hang a calf's-ſkin on thoſe recreant limbs!

Auſtria. O that a man would ſpeak thoſe
words to me!

Fal. *(low.)* And hang a calf's-ſkin on thoſe
recreant limbs.

Auſtria. Thou dar'ſt not ſay ſo, villain, for thy
life!

Fal. *(loud.)* And hang a calf's-ſkin on thoſe
recreant limbs!

Auſtria. Methinks this trophy of proud Rich-
ard's fate,
Should ſtop the mad career of your preſumption.

Fal. What do I ſee? how do my ſinews
ſhake!
My father's foe clad in my father's ſpoil!
How does Alecto whiſper in my ear:
"Delay not, Richard, kill the villain ſtraight,
"Diſrobe him of the matchleſs monument,
"Thy father's triumph o'er the foreſt-king!"
Now by my father's ſainted ſoul I ſwear,

Twice

Twice will I not review the morning's riſe,
Till I have torn that trophy from thy back——

K. John. Couſin, theſe ſallies of contentious paſſion
Suit not our preſence, or this day of peace.

K. Phil. Here comes the holy Legate of the Pope.

Enter PANDULPH.

Pan. Hail, you anointed Deputies of Heav'n!
To thee, King John, my high commiſſion ſpeaks.
I Pandulph, legate of our holy Father,
Pope Innocent, here in his ſacred name
Demand of thee, why thou againſt the Church
Haſt ſpurn'd preſumptuous, and with impious force
Kept Stephen Langton, choſen Archbiſhop
Of Canterbury, from that holy ſee?

K. John. Audacious Legate, ſay, what pow'r on earth
Can taſk the free breath of a ſacred King?
Is this the ſtyle of Rome to ſov'reign Princes?
Are theſe the meek examples of her doctrine?
Go tell thy maſter, from the mouth of England,
That no Italian Prieſt ſhall ever rule
In our dominions, but that, under Heav'n
Our high Supremacy we will uphold
Without th' aſſiſtance of a mortal hand.

So

So tell the Pope: and that I here diſclaim
Reſpect to his uſurp'd authority.*

K. Phil. Brother of England, you blaſpheme in this.

K. John. Tho' you, and all the Kings of Chriſtendom,
Are led ſo groſsly by this meddling Prieſt,
Dreading the curſe, that money may buy out;
And by the merit of vile gold, droſs, duſt,
Purchaſe corrupted pardon of a man,
Who, in that ſale, ſells pardon from himſelf:
Tho' you, and all the world, like columns ſtand,
To form triumphal arches to his pride,
Yet England ſhall alone himſelf oppoſe
Againſt the Pope!

Pan. Then by my lawful pow'r
Thou ſhalt ſtand curſt and excommunicate!
And bleſſed be that ſubject, who revolts
From his allegiance to an heretic.
And meritorious ſhall that man be call'd,
And canoniz'd, and worſhipp'd as a ſaint,
Who takes away by any ſecret courſe
Thy hateful life!

Conſt. O lawful let it be
For me to join a while with Rome in curſes!
Good

* King John had, in the beginning of his reign, ſubmitted without a ſtruggle to grant the fortieth part of his revenue to the Pope, and had exhorted his Barons to imitate his example.
HENRY's *Hiſt. of Britain*, B. III. C. ii. 4.

Good father Cardinal, cry thou amen
To my keen curſes, for without my wrong,
There is no tongue has pow'r to curſe him right.

Pan. Philip of France, on peril of a curſe,
Renounce thy treaty with that Heretic;
And raiſe the pow'r of France upon his head,
If he ſubmit not to the will of Rome.

K. John. Should France thus weakly bow the neck to thee,
And break the ſolemn vow ſo lately made,
He ſoon may rue the hour. Hear, thou proud legate,
A King's defiance to the threats of Rome!
The ſword is drawn: my people will ſupport
My rightful pow'r.—The Engliſh love their King,*
And in his cauſe will ſhed their deareſt blood.
His cauſe is theirs: they but defend themſelves,
When they defend the Sov'reign, that protects them.—
Couſin, go draw our forces in the field.
We'll be prepar'd againſt the worſt that threatens.

(Exeunt King John, Saliſbury and Falconbridge.

Pan. Thus then to thee, O France, our holy Church

* The great Barons, and their followers, adhered with ſo much ſteadineſs to the King, that when he lay under the ſentence of excommunication, he executed two ſucceſsful expeditions in Wales and Ireland.

HENRY's *Hiſt. of Britain*, B. III, c. ii, 4.

Commits her cauſe. Avoid the curſe of Rome,
And draw thy ſword againſt that vile Apoſtate.

K. Phil. Good rev'rend father, make my perſon yours.
Our royal hands are newly knit in love,
With all religious ſtrength of ſacred vows.
The lateſt breath was deep-ſworn faith and peace
Between our kingdoms and our royal ſelves.
And ſhall theſe hands, ſo lately purg'd of blood,
So newly join'd in friendſhip, jeſt with Heav'n;
Unſwear faith ſworn, and on the marriage bed
Of ſmiling peace thus march a bloody hoſt,
And make a riot on the gentle brow
Of true ſincerity?—O holy Sir,
My rev'rend Father, let it not be ſo!
Out of your grace deviſe, ordain, impoſe
Some gentle order; then we ſhall be bleſt
To do your pleaſure, and continue friends.

Pan. All form is broken, order is confuſion,
Save what is oppoſite to England's love.
Therefore to arms! be champion of our church!
Or let the church breathe her eternal curſe,
A mother's curſe, on her revolting ſon.
France, thou may'ſt hold a ſerpent by the tongue,
An angry lion by the mortal paw,
A faſting tiger ſafer by the tooth,
Than peace with England!

Conſt.

Conſt. *(kneeling)* O upon my knee,
Made hard with kneeling, let me thus entreat thee,
Moſt virtuous Philip, alter not the doom
Of righteous Heav'n!

K. Phil. My ſoul's perplex'd with doubt.
Will Heav'n not deem me perjur'd?

Pan. Thy firſt vow
Was made to be the champion of the Church.
What ſince thou ſwor'ſt, was ſworn againſt religion,
And may not be perform'd: thy latter vow,
Thus made againſt thy firſt, is flat rebellion.
And better conqueſt never canſt thou make,
Than arm thyſelf againſt theſe looſe ſuggeſtions.
My pow'r ſhall free thee: but if thou refuſe,
The peril of our curſe ſhall light on thee.

K. Phil. *(after a ſtruggle)* My forces ſhall be drawn; and at their head
I will demand of England's King to pay
A prompt obedience to the will of Rome.
If he refuſe, then be the ſignal given
To hurl th' avenging thunder of the war!

Pan. And thou ſhalt proſper, as thy cauſe is juſt.

(Trumpets.)—Exeunt.

SCENE

SCENE II.

The Dauphin's Tent.

Enter LEWIS *and* BLANCH.

Lewis. The trumpet calls, and bids me leave thee, Blanch,
My lovely bride!—in mercy to our vows,
Heav'n will unite us ſoon, to part no more.

Blanch. Ah, fatal day, whoſe morning ſhone ſo bright,
Muſt thy declining ſplendor ſet in blood!
Is then that ſacred peace, which ſmiling love,
And huſh'd ambition hand in hand have ſeal'd,
Become the victim of unfeeling war!
All the gay glories, which my fancy painted,
Are ſunk in ſorrow!—

Lewis. Faireſt, deareſt Blanch!
Can ſorrow have a place in hearts like thine,
That beat reſponſive to the call of glory?
Hard as it is to part, yet honor claims
The ſacrifice.

Blanch. Upon thy wedding day!
What, ſhall our nuptial feaſt be kept with ſlaughter?
Shall braying trumpets, and loud churliſh drums
Drown the ſoft melody of bridal ſongs?
O my lov'd Lord, my Huſband!—if that name,
Which

Which till this time my tongue had ne'er pronounc'd,
Has pow'r to move thee;—do not go to arms
Againſt my Uncle,—but confirm that peace,
Which heal'd all wounds, and bleſt me with thy love!

Lewis. Heav'n be my witneſs, how thy ſighs diſſolve me!
But ah, thou dear, thou matchleſs excellence,
Rich as thou art in each angelic grace,
Still to thy charms add one perfection more,
And let thy piety ſurmount thy love!
Religion's ſacred cauſe demands my ſword.
(Trumpet.)
The ſignal's given for battle.—Blanch, farewell!
Who fights for honor, beſt deſerves thy love.
(Exit.

Blanch. The ſun's o'ercaſt with blood: fair day, adieu!
Which way I look, a frightful precipice
Open before me, ſwallows all my hopes.
Which way I go, each army holds my hand.
Can I for either waft a pray'r to Heav'n?
For England? no: connubial bonds forbid it.
That France may conquer?—ties of blood reſtrain me.
While love and nature rival ſway maintain,
Conflicting fears diſtract my bleeding heart. *(Exit.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

A Field of Battle.*

Alarms. —— *Excurſions.*

Enter FALCONBRIDGE *with* AUSTRIA'S *head, and with the Lion's ſkin.*

NOW, by my life, this day grows wond'rous hot.
Some airy devil hovers in the ſky,
And pours down miſchief.—Auſtria's head, lie there!—
Thus has King Richard's ſon perform'd his vow,
Torn the proud trophy from the tyrant's back,
And offer'd Auſtria to his father's ſoul. *(Exit.*

Alarms.——*Fight.*

Enter KING JOHN *and* HUBERT—*meeting.*

K. John. Hubert, thy looks are cheering!
What's the news?

Hubert. Better, my liege, than e'er your hopes had promis'd!

K. John.

* The battle, in which Arthur was taken priſoner, was fought Aug. 1, 1202, near Mirebeau in Poitou, where Queen Eleanor was lodged. Our Hiſtorians (See RAPIN, HUME and HENRY) call the place Mirabel, which is a ſmall town in Quercy.

K. John. Be brief——

Hubert. The head and fountain of the war
Is ſtopt for ever. Arthur is my pris'ner.

K. John. My gallant Hubert! how ſhall I requite thee?
Keep him with ſtricteſt care!—On, on, my friend,
Commend me to the troops; their valiant deeds
Will bring this labor to a happy end. *(Exeunt.*

(A retreat is ſounded.)

Enter KING JOHN *and* FALCONBRIDGE—*meeting.*

Fal. They fly—they fly!—O bravely have we fought.
On ev'ry ſide are fruits of victory.—
May ſuch a triumph ever be obtain'd
O'er England's foes!

K. John. This glorious day, fair Couſin,
Has made me debtor to thy dauntleſs valor.—
Now haſte to England for new ſubſidies.
And, ere our coming, ſee thou ſhake the bags
Of hoarding abbots;—the impriſon'd angels
Set thou at large: the pamper'd ribs of peace
Muſt yield their ſubſtance to the hungry war*.

Fal.

* King John in one year extorted the enormous ſum of 140,000l. from the Abbeys and Monaſteries. But taxation was not confined to the clergy. Every claſs of the people paid a contribution, amounting to the thirteenth of their goods. The Jews were particular objects of the King's exactions. He ordered them

Fal. Bell, book and candle ſhall not drive me back,
When gold and ſilver beck me to come on.
I leave your Highneſs, and will ever pray
For you, my King; and for my Country's weal.
(Exit.

K. John. *(to Hubert entering.)*
Now Hubert, where's the boy?

Hubert. Safe in my tent.
I come to know your farther pleaſure, Sir.

K. John. Remove him ſtrait to Rouen: in the caſtle
Let him be cloſely guarded.----*(Hubert is going).*
Hubert! Hubert!---
Come nearer, Hubert!---O my gentle Hubert,
We owe thee much;---within this wall of fleſh
There is a ſoul, counts thee her creditor,
And with advantage means to pay thy love.
And my good friend, thy faithful ſervices
Live in this boſom, dearly cheriſhed.—
Give me thy hand.—I had a thing to ſay;—
But I will fit it to ſome better time.

By

them to be impriſoned, to compel them to large ſubſcriptions. Of a certain Jew of Briſtol he demanded 10,000 marks, a ſum equal to 100,000l. of the preſent money, and ordered one of his teeth to be extracted every day until he paid the ſum. The unfortunate man ſubmitted to the loſs of ſeven of his teeth before he parted with his money. See ANDERSON's *Hiſtory of Commerce*, M. PARIS, RAPIN, HENRY, &c.

By Heaven, Hubert, I'm almoſt aſham'd
To ſay, what good reſpect I have of thee.

Hubert. I am much bounden to your Majeſty.

K. John. Good friend, thou haſt no cauſe to ſay ſo yet:
But thou ſhalt have; and creep time ne'er ſo ſlow,
Yet it ſhall come for me to do thee good.
I had a thing to ſay:---but let it go.---
The Sun is in the Heav'n;---and the proud day,
Attended with the pleaſures of the world,
Is all too wanton, and too full of gawds,
To give me audience.---If the midnight bell
Did with its iron tongue and brazen mouth
Sound horror to the drowſy race of night;—
If this place were a church yard, where we ſtand,
And thou affected with a thouſand wrongs;
Or if that ſurly ſpirit, melancholy,
Had bak'd thy blood, and made it heavy, thick;
(Which elſe runs tickling up and down the veins,
Making that ideot, laughter, keep men's eyes,
And ſtrain their cheeks to idle merriment;—
A paſſion hateful to my purpoſes)---
Or couldſt thou, Hubert, ſee me without eyes,
Hear me without thy ears, and make reply
Without a tongue, uſing conceit alone,
Without eyes, ears, or harmful ſound of words;—
Then, in deſpite of broad-ey'd watchful day,
I would into thy boſom pour my thoughts.—

But ah, I will not:—yet I love thee well;—
And, by my troth, I think thou lov'ſt me well.

Hubert. So well, that what you bid me undertake,
Tho' inſtant death were adjunct to the act,
By Heav'n, I'd do't.

K. John. Do not I know thou wouldſt?
Good Hubert—Hubert—Hubert—think of Arthur—
That dang'rous boy!—I'll tell thee what, my friend,
He is a very ſerpent in my way;
And whereſoe'er this foot in fancy treads,
He lies before me.—Doſt thou underſtand me?
Thou art his keeper.

Hubert. And I'll keep him ſo,
That he ſhall not offend your Majeſty.

K. John. Death!—death!

Hubert. My Lord!

K. John. A grave!

Hubert. He ſhall not live.

K. John. Enough—my fears are over—O my Hubert!
I could be merry now—but to reward thee,—
Well, I'll not ſay what I intend for thee.
This night I go for England.—When 'tis done,
Be thou the meſſenger! Farewell!—Remember!

Exeunt.

SCENE

SCENE II.

The French Court.

Enter K. PHILIP, LEWIS, PANDULPH, *and* LORDS.

K. Phil. So by a tempeſt, that has cruſh'd our hopes,
A whole armada of collected ſail
Is ſcatter'd on the boſom of the main.*

Pan. Courage and comfort! all ſhall yet go well.

K. Phil. What can go well, when there's a hand in Heav'n,
That fights againſt us?—See the juſt reward
Of violated faith!---Are theſe, raſh Legate,
Are theſe thy promis'd bleſſings from above?
Are we not beaten?—Is not Angers loſt?
Arthur ta'en pris'ner?---many dear friends ſlain?

* Shakeſpeare has been followed here: but it is not eaſy to conjecture to what calamity Philip alludes. The battle of Damme was not attended by a ſtorm; and it took place after the Legate had ordered the King of France to lay aſide his intention of making war againſt John, who had ſubmitted to the conditions of Rome. This diſperſion of the French fleet muſt therefore be a different event. Perhaps the object of the Poet was to bring to the recollection of the Audience the recent defeat of the Spaniſh Armada; or merely to increaſe the dejection of Philip and of Lewis, and to throw a gloom over the ſcene, before the introduction of the frantic mother of Arthur.

While John, victorious from our bleeding fields,
With ſpoils of France in triumph ſails for England.—
But look, who comes this way!—a living grave,
That holds th' eternal ſpirit 'gainſt her will
In the vile priſon of afflicted earth.

Enter CONSTANCE.

Conſt. Lo, now you ſee the iſſue of your peace!

K. Phil. Patience, good Lady! comfort, gentle Conſtance!

Conſt. No, I defy all counſel, all redreſs—
But that, which ends all counſel, true redreſs,
Death, death!—O lovely cure of human woe!—
Ariſe forth from thy couch of laſting night,
Thou hate and terror to proſperity,
And I will kiſs thy deteſtable bones,
And put my eye-balls in thy vaulty brows,
And ring theſe fingers with thy houſehold worms,
And be a fearful monſter like thyſelf.
Come, grin on me, and I will think thou ſmil'ſt,
And claſp thee in my arms. Come, mis'ry's love,
O come to me!

K. Phil. O fair affliction, peace!

Conſt. No, no, I will not, having breath to cry:
O that my tongue were in the thunder's mouth,
Then with a paſſion would I ſhake the world,
And rouſe from ſleep that fell anatomy,

Which

Which cannot hear a woman's feeble voice,
And ſcorns the invocation of deſpair!

Pan. Lady, you utter madneſs, and not ſorrow.

Conſt. Thou art unholy to belie me ſo.—
I am not mad:—this hair I tear is mine.
My name is Conſtance:—I was Geoffrey's wife:
Prince Arthur is my ſon—and he is loſt.
I am not mad: ah would to Heav'n I were!
For then perhaps I ſhould forget myſelf.
O if I could, what grief would I forget.
Preach ſome philoſophy to make me mad,
And, Cardinal, thou ſhalt be canoniz'd.
For reaſon makes me ſenſible of grief.—
If I were mad, I ſhould forget my ſon,
Or wayward fancy might ſupply his place.
I am not mad-- --too well, too well I feel
The diff'rent plague of each calamity.

K. Phil. O calm your ſorrows—and bind up your hairs.

Conſt. Yes, that I will;—and wherefore will I do it?
I tore them from their bonds, and cried aloud:
O that theſe hands could ſo redeem my ſon,
As they have giv'n theſe hairs their liberty!
But now I envy them their liberty,
Becauſe my poor boy is a priſoner.—
And, Father Cardinal, I've heard you ſay
That we ſhall ſee, and know, our friends in Heav'n.

If

If that be, I ſhall ſee my boy again.
For ſince the birth of Cain, the firſt male child,
To him that drew the vital air this day,
There was not ſuch a graceful creature born.
But now will canker ſorrow eat my bud,
And chaſe the native beauty from his cheek;
And he will look as hollow as a ghoſt,
As dim and meagre as an ague's fit.
And ſo he'll die; and riſing ſo again,
When I ſhall meet him in the court of Heav'n,
I ſhall not know him: therefore never, never,
Muſt I behold my pretty Arthur more!

Pan. You hold too heinous a reſpect of grief.

Conſt. He talks to me, that never had a ſon!

K. Phil. You are as fond of grief, as of your child.

Conſt. Grief fills the room up of my abſent child;
Lies in his bed; walks up and down with me;
Puts on his pretty looks; repeats his words;
Remembers me of all his former parts;
Stuffs out his vacant garments with his form;—
Then have I reaſon to be fond of grief!—
Fare you well!—had you ſuch a loſs as I,
I could give better comfort than you do.—
I will not keep this form upon my head,
(Tearing off her head-dreſs.)
When there is ſuch diſorder in my wit.
O Lord!

O Lord!—my boy,—my Arthur, my dear ſon!
My life, my joy, my food, my all the world!
My widow-comfort, and my ſorrow's cure! *(Exit.*

Lewis. There's nothing in this world can make me joy:
Life is as tedious as a twice-told tale,
Vexing the dull ear of a drowſy man.
Shame has ſo ſpoil'd the ſweetneſs of the world,
That it yields nought but grief and bitterneſs.

Pan. Droop not, young Prince! thy fainting cauſe revives.
Whenever fortune means to men moſt good,
She looks upon them with a threat'ning eye.
Howe'er proud John may boaſt his feats in France,
He will in England be receiv'd with frowns.
His murm'ring Barons, ripe for a revolt,
Invite the arms of France to their aſſiſtance.
Thus, while thy hopes were ſinking, they are rais'd
To vengeance, conqueſt, and extended empire.

K. Phil. To England's empire what vain hope can raiſe us?

Pan. Now hear me ſpeak with a prophetic ſpirit.
For ev'n the breath of what I mean to ſay
Shall blow each duſt, each ſtraw, each little rub
Out of the path, that ſhall directly lead
Thy ſon to England's throne.

Lewis.

Lewis. Explain the means!

Pan. John has ſeiz'd Arthur; and it cannot be,
That while warm life plays in the Prince's veins,
The tyrant's fears ſhould know an hour of reſt.
Arthur remov'd,—in right of Lady Blanch,
You claim the crown, fall'n from the head of John.

Lewis. And loſe it, life and all, as Arthur did!

Pan. How green you are, and freſh in this old world!
John plots for you: the times conſpire with you.
For he, that ſteeps his ſafety in the blood
Of innocence, ſhall find that ſafety bloody.
The Engliſh love humanity; their rage
Swells at the ſight of wanton tyranny.
At this inhuman deed, they will fall off,
And kiſs the lips of unacquainted change,
And draw ſtrong cauſes of revolt and wrath
Out of the bloody fingers' ends of John.
Methinks I ſee this hurly all on foot.
No nat'ral exhalation in the ſky,
No common tempeſt, no diſtemper'd day,
But they will pluck away the nat'ral cauſe,
And call them prodigies, and ſigns from Heav'n,
Denouncing vengeance on the head of John.

K. Phil. I ſee it now: the hand of Heav'n directs it.
We ſhall prepare for this auſpicious war.
Go then, our eldeſt hope, be thine the glory!

Drive

Drive this fell tyrant from fair Albion's ſhore,
Aſſert thy right, and mount his forfeit throne!
To thy ſage counſels, Father, we commend him.

Pan. Not my own life more precious than this care.

Lewis. Nor life more pleaſing than this glorious charge.
Thy bleſſing, royal Father!—*(Kneels to King Philip, who bleſſes him, and exit.)* Now, for England!
(Exeunt.

SCENE III.

A Room in the Caſtle of Rouen.

Enter HUBERT *and* EXECUTIONERS.

Hubert. Make me theſe irons hot; and look you ſtand
Within the arras:—when I ſtrike my foot
Upon the boſom of the ground, ruſh forth,
And bind the boy, whom you ſhall find with me,
Faſt to yon bar: be heedful, hence and watch!

1ſt. Executioner. I hope your orders will bear out the deed.*

* Hubert, according to Shakeſpeare, receives a *warrant* from the King to put Arthur to death. It is not probable that John, who had experienced ſuch ſtruggles before he "faintly broke with him

Hubert. Unmanly ſcruple! Fear not you!—
away! *(Exeunt Executioners.*
Young lad, come forth! I have to ſpeak with
you.

Enter ARTHUR.

Arthur. Good morrow, Sir!

Hubert. Good morrow, little Prince.

Arthur. As little Prince, (having ſo great a title
To be more Prince) as may be.——You are ſad.

Hubert. Indeed I have been merrier.

Arthur. Mercy on me!
Methinks nobody ſhould be ſad but I.
Yet were I out of priſon, and kept ſheep,
I ſhould be merry as the day is long.
And ſo I would be here, but that I fear
My uncle practiſes more harm to me.
He is afraid of me, as I of him.
Is it my fault that I was Geoffrey's ſon?
Indeed,

him of Arthur's death," ſhould commit himſelf ſo far as to give Hubert a formal inſtrument for that expreſs purpoſe. Hubert is ſo little inclined to hide the dreadful ſecret in his boſom, that, by a climax of improbability, he is ſaid to "ſhew his *warrant* to a friend of Lord Pembroke," Act IV, Scene II. This impropriety is here, it is hoped, effectually avoided. Hubert indeed gives Arthur a paper, but it is only to inform the young Prince of his fate, and to ſpare himſelf the expreſs avowal of the inhuman deſign, "which his tongue held vile to name." Hubert was affectionately and zealouſly attached to the King; but he was a brave man, and therefore unfit for the remorſeleſs commiſſion of ſuch a deed of "bloody villainy."

Indeed, it is not: and I would to Heav'n
I were your ſon, ſo you would love me, Hubert!

Hubert. *(aſide)* If I talk to him, with his innocent prate
He will awake my mercy, which lies dead.
Therefore I will be ſudden, and diſpatch.

Arthur. Are you ſick, Hubert?——You look pale to day.
In ſooth I would you were a little ſick,
That I might ſit all night, and watch with you.
I'm ſure, I love you more than you do me.

Hubert. How his words take poſſeſſion of my boſom!
Read here, young Arthur! [*ſhewing a paper.*
How now! fooliſh rheum!
Melting diſpiteous torture into mercy!
I muſt be brief, leſt reſolution drop
Out of my eyes in tender womaniſh tears.
Can you not read it?—Is it not fair writ?

Arthur. Too fairly, Hubert, for ſo foul effect.—
Muſt you with irons burn out both my eyes?

Hubert. Young boy, I muſt.

Arthur. And will you?

Hubert. And I will.

Arthur. Have you the heart?—when your head did but ache,
I knit my handkerchief about your brows:

(The beſt I had---a princeſs wrought it me)
And with my hand at midnight held your head;
And, like the watchful minutes to the hour,
Still and anon cheer'd up the heavy time,
Saying: "what want you? and where lies your pain?
Or, what good love may I perform for you?"
Many a poor man's ſon would have lain ſtill,
And ne'er have ſpoke a loving word to you;
But you at your ſick ſervice had a Prince.
Nay, you may think my love was crafty love,
And call it cunning: do it, if you will:
If Heav'n be pleas'd that you muſt uſe me ill—
Why then you muſt.—Will you put out my eyes?
Thoſe eyes, that never did, and never ſhall,
So much as frown on you?—

Hubert. I've ſworn to do it;
And with hot irons muſt I burn them out.

Arthur. Ah! none, but in this iron age, would do it.
The iron of itſelf, though made red-hot,
Approaching near theſe eyes, would drink my tears,
And quench the indignation of the fire!
Are you more ſtubborn-hard than hammer'd iron?

Hubert. *(ſtamping)* Come forth, do as I bid you.

Arthur. Save me, Hubert!
O Hubert,

O Hubert, ſave me!—my eyes will be out,
Ev'n with the fierce looks of theſe bloody men.

Hubert. Give me the iron quick, and bind him here.

Arthur. Alas! what need you be ſo boiſt'rous rough?
I will not ſtruggle, I will ſtand ſtone-ſtill.
For Heav'n-ſake, Hubert, let me not be bound!
Nay hear me, Hubert, drive theſe men away,
And I will ſit as quiet as a lamb:
I will not ſtir, nor wince, nor ſpeak a word,
Nor look upon the iron angrily.
Thruſt but theſe men away, and I'll forgive you,
Whatever torment you ſhall put me to.

Hubert. Go, ſtand without — let me alone with him.

1*ſt Executioner.* I am beſt pleas'd to be from ſuch a deed. (*Exeunt Ex.*

Arthur. Alas, I then have chid away my friend!
He has a ſtern look, but a gentle heart.
Let him come back, that his compaſſion may
Give life to yours.

Hubert. Come boy, prepare yourſelf.

Arthur. Is there no remedy?

Hubert. None, but to loſe your eyes.

Arthur.

Arthur. O Heav'n, that there were but a moth in yours,
A grain, a gnat, a duſt, a wand'ring hair,
Any annoyance of that precious ſenſe,
Then feeling what ſmall things are painful there,
Your vile intent muſt needs ſeem horrible.

Hubert. Is this your promiſe? Go to,—hold your tongue.

Arthur. Hubert, the utt'rance of a brace of tongues
Muſt needs want pleading for a pair of eyes.
Let me not hold my tongue!—let me not, Hubert!
Or, Hubert, if you will, cut out my tongue,
So I may keep my eyes!—O ſpare my eyes,
Tho' to no uſe, but ſtill to look on you!—
Lo, by my troth, the inſtrument is cold,
And would not harm me.

Hubert. I will heat it, boy.

Arthur. No, in good ſooth, the fire is dead with grief
Thus to be uſed in acts of cruelty
'Gainſt undeſerving innocence!—Ah, look!
There is no malice burning in this coal;
The breath of Heav'n has blown its ſpirit out,
And ſtrew'd repentant aſhes on it's head.

Hubert. But with my breath I will revive it, boy.

Arthur.

Arthur. And if you do, you will but make
it bluſh,
And glow with ſhame of your proceedings, Hubert.
All things, that you would uſe to do me wrong,
Deny their office, and you only want
That mercy, which e'en fire and iron ſhew.

Hubert. Hold thy tongue, boy, or I'll increaſe
thy pain!

Arthur. I will—O ſpare me, Hubert, but a
moment,
But while I pray to God!—I'll not be loud—
I'll not be heard by you—indeed I need not—
The ſofteſt ſigh is heard aloud in Heav'n!—
Was it for this I ſent my pray'rs for Hubert?

Hubert. For me!

Arthur. This very hour I pray'd for you.
O if an Angel ſhould have come to me,
And told me Hubert would put out my eyes,
I would not have believ'd him—none but Hubert!

Hubert, (throwing away the iron.) I cannot bear
this innocence!

Arthur. O Heav'n!
My pray'r is heard—and Hubert is himſelf!
In his relenting eye his virtue gleams,
And, like my guardian Angel, *(kneeling down and
embracing his knees)* has diſpell'd
This dream of death.

Hubert.

Hubert. O raiſe thee from the earth,
Poor injur'd Prince!—thy looks, thy kind affection,
Have conquer'd, and redeem'd my ſoul from ruin.

Arthur. Now you have taught my eyes to weep for you.—
And ſhall I live!

Hubert. Not all thy uncle's treaſure
Shall tempt me e'er to hurt thee. Hence to England,*
In ſome ſecure concealment will I bear thee,
Till kinder fate ſhall diſſipate thy danger.

Arthur. How ſhall I thank thee, Hubert?

Hubert. Peace, no more!—
Thy uncle muſt not know but thou art dead.
I'll fill theſe dogged ſpies with falſe reports.—
And, pretty child, ſleep doubtleſs and aſſur'd
That Hubert, for the wealth of all the world,
Will not offend thee.

Arthur. O my kind preſerver!

Hubert. Silence, no more! go cloſely in with me.
Much danger ſhall I undergo for thee! *(Exeunt.*

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

* The original is here followed, in conveying the Prince to England. But it is hoped that the motives, which induce Hubert to bring him over, are more plauſible than thoſe, which Shakeſpeare has given to John. It is difficult to conceive why the King, who had determined that Arthur ſhould be put to death immediately, ſhould order him to be brought with him to England: a circumſtance, which could only tend to increaſe ſuſpicion.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

The Court of England.

KING JOHN, EARLS OF SALISBURY, PEMBROKE, ESSEX, *and Attendants.*

K. John.

THUS, crown'd with vict'ry in the fields of France*,
I come to ſeek the bleſſings of repoſe
On the ſoft boſom of domeſtic peace.
Still clouds are low'ring on the Engliſh ſky:
To diſſipate the gloom, and ſpread around
The foſt'ring beams of unity and joy;
To free the cottage and ſecure the throne,
To deal impartial juſtice, and to fix
The rights of King and People on the baſe

* The ſucceſs of John in France was of ſhort duration. His father poſſeſſed in that country the Provinces of Guienne, Poitou, Xaintonge, Auvergne, Limouſin, Perigord, Angoumois, Anjou, Maine, Touraine and Normandy; beſides the acquiſition, which he made by the marriage of his ſon Geoffrey, in 1167, to Conſtance, daughter and heireſs of Conan, Count of Bretagne. But John loſt the whole, except Guienne.

Of mutual int'reſt,—we will ſeal the Charter *
Of Engliſh liberty!——Meantime, but aſk
What elſe you would reform, and I will hear,
And grant you your requeſts.

Pem. Then I, my liege,
Who ſound the purpoſe of the people's hearts,
Urg'd by your ſafety, which my faithful zeal
Holds deareſt in affection, humbly crave
Th' enfranchiſement of Arthur, whoſe reſtraint
Has mov'd the murm'ring lips of diſcontent,
And grac'd th' occaſions of your enemies.

K. John.

* Here was that Charter ſeal'd, wherein the Crown
All marks of arbitrary pow'r lays down.
Tyrant and Slave, thoſe names of hate and fear,
The happier ſtyle of King and Subject bear.

DENHAM's *Cooper's-Hill.*

The ſilence of Shakeſpeare on the great ſubject of Engliſh Liberty has been conſidered as a proof of the ſpirit of the Prerogative during the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Hume, a writer, who cannot be ſuſpected of too great an attachment to the cauſe of the people, in his remarks on this ſubject, has proved that he was better calculated to form a judgment on the political caution, than on the dramatic genius, of our immortal Poet.

Muſt we form a ſimilar opinion of the ſpirit of the preſent times, on the recollection that a ſubſcription, which was begun a few years ago, to erect a monument in Runnimede, was not only diſcouraged, but ridiculed by a party in this Country? On that ſubject the author of this note can form no judgment;—but he will be ſeriouſly mortified if the Naval Pillar in honor of our illuſtrious Admirals;—that great object, to which he principally aſcribes the ſucceſs of this Play,—ſhould not be completed, and prove to the world the gratitude and the loyalty of the Britiſh nation.

K. John. Let it be ſo: I ſhall commit his youth
To your direction. Hubert comes from France,
Charg'd with his princely Pris'ner.—He's arriv'd.

Enter HUBERT.

Hubert, what news with you?—ſay, where is Arthur?

(King John and Hubert talk aſide.)

Pem. Ev'n at this man ſuſpicion's finger points.
The image of a crime lives in his eye.
That cloudy aſpect ſhews a troubled heart.
I fear——

Saliſ. See, the King's color comes and goes,
Between his conſcience and his cloſe deſign!

(Exit Hubert.

K. John. [*Advancing.*] We cannot hold mortality's ſtrong hand.
Great Lords, the object of your ſuit is loſt.
He tells us, Arthur is deceas'd in France.

Saliſ. Indeed we fear'd his ſickneſs was paſt cure.

Pem. We heard, indeed, how near his death he was,
Before the youth himſelf perceiv'd his ſickneſs.
This muſt be anſwer'd, either here or hence.

K. John. Why do you bend ſuch ſolemn brows on me?

Think you I bear the ſhears of deſtiny?
Have I commandment on the pulſe of life?

Saliſ. It is apparent foul play: and 'tis ſhame
That greatneſs ſhould ſo groſsly offer it.
So thrive it in your game; and ſo farewell.

Pem. The ſhade of Arthur points the way to vengeance! *(Exeunt Saliſbury, &c.*

K. John. They burn in indignation: oh, my heart!
There is no ſure foundation ſet on blood.
My jealous fears have plung'd my arm too far!
A raſh and fruitleſs policy! for Arthur
Becomes in death more terrible than living.

Enter a MESSENGER.

A fearful eye thou haſt! where is that blood,
Which I have ſeen throw crimſon in thoſe cheeks?
So foul a ſky clears not without a ſtorm.
Pour down thy weather. How goes all in France?

Meſ. France threatens England: never ſuch a power
Of preparation for a foreign war
Was levied in the body of a land!
The French have learnt to imitate your ſpeed,
For when you ſhould be told they are preparing,
The tidings come that they are on the coaſt.

K. John. Dreadful occaſion, O with-hold thy ſpeed,

And

And make a league with me, 'till I have pleas'd
My diſcontented nobles, and regain'd
Their confidence! Who leads th' invading foe?

Meſ. Lewis, the Dauphin.*

K. John. Thou haſt made me giddy
With theſe ill tidings.—Bring me better news!

(Exit Meſſenger.

Enter FALCONBRIDGE.

Couſin, what bring'ſt thou?—do not ſeek to ſtuff
My head with more diſaſters. It is full.

Fal. But, if you be afraid to hear the worſt,
Then let the worſt, unheard, fall on your head!

K. John. Bear with me, Couſin, for each ſenſe was whelm'd
Under the tide; but now I breathe again
Above the flood. Hear'ſt thou the news abroad?

Fal. The French are landed: our united force
Would with their blood ſoon dye the Kentiſh ſhores,
And fortify allegiance; but the Barons
Will join the Dauphin; for the death of Arthur
Has

* The appellation given to Lewis by Shakeſpeare has been preſerved. But the title of *Dauphin* was firſt given to Charles, eldeſt ſon of John, King of France, in 1350. It is ſingular that this circumſtance has eſcaped the notice of the Commentators, particularly of Meſſrs. Steevens and Malone, each of whom has a note on the title of Lewis in the firſt ſcene of the ſecond Act of King John.

Has ſo inflam'd the head of their complaints,
That never will their ſwords in peace be ſheath'd,
Till vengeance fall upon the murd'rer's head.

K. John. O ſave me from domeſtic enemies,
When foreign war invades my ſhrinking realms!
(After a ſtruggle.) Rome, thou ſhalt triumph!—
To the legate fly,
Tell him—thy King—bends to the Holy ſee*.
Be Mercury! ſet feathers to thy heels,
Reſtore internal peace, and ſave thy country!

Fal. The ſpirit of the time ſhall give me ſpeed.
(Exit.

Enter HUBERT.

Hubert. My Lord, they ſay five moons were
ſeen to-night!

K. John. Five moons!

Hubert. Old men, and beldams in the
ſtreets,
In wonder utter dang'rous prophecies.

Young

* Shakeſpeare does not prepare the audience for the ſubmiſſion of the King to the Pope in the Fifth Act. The only paſſage, which may ſeem to indicate this intention, is in Act IV, Scene II, when the King tells Falconbridge:

"I have a way to win their loves again."

Cibber, on the contrary, has employed ſeveral pages in the preparations to this humiliating ſcene. He has not only exaggerated, conſiſtently with his plan, the haughtineſs of the Legate, but has repreſented the fiery and impetuous Falconbridge "humbly kneeling at his reverend feet."

Young Arthur's death is common in their mouths,
And when they talk of him, they ſhake their heads,
And whiſper one another in the ear:
And he that's ſpeaking, gripes the hearer's wriſt;
While he, that hears, makes fearful action
With wrinkled brows, with nods, with rolling eyes.
I ſaw a ſmith ſtand with his hammer thus,
The while his iron on the anvil cool'd,
With open mouth ſwallowing a taylor's news;
Who, with his ſhears and meaſure in his hand,
Standing on ſlippers, which his nimble haſte
Had falſely thruſt upon contrary feet,
Told of the many thouſand warlike French,
That were embattled and drawn up in Kent—
Another lean, unwaſh'd artificer
Cuts off his tale, and talks of Arthur's death.

K. John. Why ſeek'ſt thou to poſſeſs me with theſe fears?
Why urgeſt thou ſo oft young Arthur's death?
Thy hand has murder'd him. I had ſome cauſe
To wiſh him dead, but thou hadſt none to kill him.

Hubert. Had none, my Lord?—why—did you not incite me?

K. John. It is the curſe of Kings to be attended
By ſlaves, that take their humors for a warrant,
Preſume

Preſume to know the meaning of a frown,
And from their paſſions underſtand a law!

Hubert. Had I not your direction for the act?

K. John. O, when the laſt account 'twixt Heav'n and Earth
Is to be made, how ſhall this curs'd direction
Witneſs againſt us to eternal death!
How oft the ſight of means to do ill deeds
Suggeſts the practice! Hadſt thou not been by,
This murder had not come into my mind.
But finding thee for bloody buſineſs fit,
And apt to be employ'd in deeds of danger,
I faintly broke with thee of Arthur's death.
And thou, to gain the favor of a King,
Mad'ſt it no conſcience to deſtroy a Prince.

Hubert. Hear me, my Lord, and pacify your mind.—

K. John. Hadſt thou but ſhook thy head, or made a pauſe,
When I ſpoke darkly what I only wiſh'd;
Or turn'd a look of doubt upon my eye,
Or bade me tell my tale in formal words;
Deep ſhame had ſtruck me dumb, made me break off,
And ſmother in my breaſt the bloody deed.
But thou, like the arch-fiend in Paradiſe,
With curſt intent lay'ſt lurking in my way,
To watch the ſecret wiſhes of my ſoul,

And

And tempt its frailty to eternal ruin.
Out of my ſight—and never ſee me more!
My nobles leave me, and my kingdom's brav'd
Ev'n at my gates, with ranks of foreign powers.
Nay, in this body civil tumult reigns
Between my conſcience, and my Couſin's death.

Hubert. Arm you againſt your other enemies!
I'll make a peace between your ſoul and you.
Know, Arthur lives! this hand is innocent,
Not tainted with the crimſon ſpots of blood.
Ah, when I ſaw his innocence, his tears,
With melting heart I dropt the ſavage purpoſe,
Preſerv'd him at the hazard of your rage,
And brought him ſafe to England.

K. John. Kindeſt friend!
O Hubert! thou haſt ſav'd thy Maſter's ſoul.
The rage thou fear'dſt is chang'd to boundleſs joy,
That crowns thy diſobedience with applauſe.—
Does Arthur live?—O haſten to the Peers,
Produce the child to pacify their anger,
And bring them back to duty and allegiance.
Then ſhall this land invading foes defy,
Nor fear the threats of Lewis or of Rome!

(Exeunt on different ſides.

SCENE

SCENE II.

A Street before a Caſtle.

Enter ARTHUR *on the Wall.**

Arthur. The wall is high, and yet I will leap down;—
For what is life, depriv'd of liberty!—
I am afraid, and yet I'll venture it.
If I ſucceed, and do not break my limbs,
I'll

* In a ſubject of ſo much uncertainty as the place and the manner of Arthur's death, Shakeſpeare properly choſe the moſt ſtriking incidents in the various relations. After the battle of Mirebeau, the unfortunate Prince was confined in the Caſtle of Falaiſe, whence he was removed to that of Rouen, where he is ſuppoſed to have periſhed. *Subitò evanuit*, is the expreſſion of Matthew Paris. That he died of grief in his confinement;—that he leaped from the Caſtle walls, endeavouring to eſcape acroſs the river, and periſhed in the attempt;—that he was put to death by the hand of the King;—different writers have aſſerted. Even of the ſcene of his death various accounts are given: D'Argentré, who has related the tragical cataſtrophe with the circumſtances of the deepeſt diſtreſs, affirms that he was ſtabbed and thrown from a precipice by his barbarous uncle at Cherbourg.

Hubert du Bourg is ſaid to have once preſerved his life, when an aſſaſſin was ſent to deſtroy the young Prince. He promiſed that he would himſelf execute the bloody office; he ſpread the report of Arthur's death, and publicly performed the ceremonies of his burial. But finding that the revolt of the Barons became more obſtinate by the ſuſpicion of the murder, he revealed the ſecret, and gave information that the Prince was ſafe in his cuſtody. Theſe circumſtances were judiciouſly ſeized by the great Poet, and gave birth to two of the moſt intereſting ſcenes, that ever employed the ſtrength of his creative genius.

I'll find a thouſand ſhifts to get away.—
Heav'n give me ſtrength! Whatever chance befalls me
Cannot exceed the mis'ries I've endured.
Better to die, attempting to eſcape,
Than pine away in hourly fear of death.
(Leaps down.
O me! my uncle's ſpirit's in theſe ſtones—
Thy will be done!—O Heav'n!—receive my ſoul!
(Dies)

Enter SALISBURY, PEMBROKE, ESSEX, HUBERT *and* FALCONBRIDGE.

Pem. Prove Arthur living, we accept the terms,
And ſeal obedience to the power of John!
Think not we mean to tear away the crown,
That ſaves this land from democratic rage,
From the wild waſte of frantic anarchy.
No! we aſſert the rights of innocence:
We claim the ſafety of an Engliſh Prince,
The liberty of Arthur:—bring him forth,
We'll ſheath our ſword, or turn it on the foe!

Pal. Spoke with the ſpirit of an Engliſh Peer!
Now, Hubert, lead us, where we may behold
The dear young Arthur.—

(In the way, Saliſbury ſees the body of Arthur)

Saliſ. Who is it lies here?
Ha! ſee! It is himſelf!—the royal Arthur!

Breathleſs and loſt beyond recovery!

Hubert. Ah, fatal chance!

Pem. This is the very creſt
Of murder's arms! this is the bloodieſt ſhame,
The wildeſt cruelty, the vileſt ſtroke,
That ever wall-ey'd wrath, or ſtaring rage
Preſented to the tears of ſoft remorſe!

Saliſ. It is the ſhameful work of Hubert's hand,
The purpoſe, and the practice of the King,
From whoſe allegiance I withdraw my ſoul,
Kneeling before this ruin of ſweet life,
And breathing to this breathleſs excellence
The incenſe of a vow, a holy vow:
Never to taſte the pleaſures of the world,
Never to be infected with delight,
Or converſant with eaſe and idleneſs,
'Till I have ſet a glory to this hand,
By giving it the honor of revenge!

Pem. Our ſouls religiouſly confirm thy oath.

Saliſ. Hubert is bold, and bluſhes not at death.
Avaunt, thou hateful villain, get thee gone!
Or feel my vengeance!

Hubert. Saliſbury, away!
By Heav'n, I think, my ſword's as ſharp as yours.
I would not have you, Lord, forget yourſelf,
Or tempt the danger of my true defence.

Saliſ. Thou art a murd'rer.

Hubert

Hubert. Do not make me ſo.
If you but frown on me, or ſtir your foot,
Or teach your haſty ſpleen to ſlander me,
I'll ſtrike you dead. — Put up your ſword: you'll find
I am no murderer.

Pem. Who kill'd this Prince?

Hubert. By Heav'n, within this hour I left him well.
I honor'd him, I lov'd him, and my grief
Shall know no comfort for his ſweet life's loſs.

Saliſ. Truſt not theſe cunning waters of his eyes.
This is the common art of villainy;
He makes them ſeem the tears of innocence.
Away with me, all you, whoſe ſouls abhor
Cold-blooded murder, and foul cruelty!

Eſſex. Away tow'rds Bury, to the Dauphin's camp!

Pem. There tell the King he may enquire us out! *(Exeunt Saliſ. Pem. and Eſſex.*

Fal. Here's a good world! knew you of this fair work?—
Beyond the infinite and boundleſs reach
Of mercy, if thou didſt this deed of death,
Art thou damn'd, Hubert!

Hubert. Do but hear me, Sir!

Fal.

Fal. There is not yet ſo ugly a fiend of Hell,
As thou ſhalt be, if thou didſt kill this child!

Hubert. By all my hopes——

Fal. If thou didſt but conſent
To this moſt cruel act,—do but deſpair;
And if thou want'ſt a cord, the ſmalleſt thread,
That ever ſpider twiſted from her womb,
Will ſtrangle thee: a ruſh will be a beam
To hang thee on; or wouldſt thou drown thyſelf,
Put but a little water in a ſpoon,
And it ſhall be as all the ocean,
Enough to ſtifle ſuch a villain up!
I do ſuſpect thee very grievouſly.

Hubert. If I in act, conſent, or ſin of thought
Be guilty of the ſtealth of that ſweet life,
Let Hell want pains enough to torture me!
I left him well.

Fal. Go, bear him in thy arms.
Dejected and amaz'd, I loſe my way
Among the thorns and dangers of the world.
From this pale maſs of lifeleſs royalty
The life, the right, the truth of all this realm
Is fled to Heav'n; and England now is doom'd
To be the prey of tumult and contention.
Now for the bare-pick'd bone of Majeſty
Shall dogged war uprear his angry creſt,
And terrify the gentle eyes of peace.
Now foreign pow'rs, and diſcontents at home

Meet

Meet in one line, and vaſt confuſion waits
The imminent decay of pow'r uſurp'd.—
How happy he, who in the lowly vale
Of private life, enjoys the calm of eaſe,
Nor fears this tempeſt!—Bear away that child,
And follow me with ſpeed. I'll to the King.
Danger in his moſt hideous form appears,
And Heav'n itſelf upon the country frowns!

(Exeunt.

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

The Court of England.

PANDULPH *ſitting,* — KING JOHN, *and* ATTENDANTS.

K. John (his Crown having been given to Pandulph.)

THUS have I yielded up into your hand
The circle of my glory.——

Pan. Take again,
As holding from the Pope's ſuperior pow'r
Your former greatneſs and authority.

K. John. Now keep your holy word: and ſave this realm!
Our diſcontented Peers revolt againſt us,
Swearing allegiance to a foreign Lord.
You only can recall their loyalty.
And let me plead for an afflicted people,
Pierc'd with the pains of errors not their own!
O never ſhall this breaſt be bleſt with comfort,
Till holy mercy ſhall reſtore their peace.

Pan. It was my breath, that blew this tempeſt up;
But your converſion ſhall diſpel the cloud.

My

My tongue ſhall huſh the ſtorm of foreign war,
And bleſs your country with internal calm.
(Exit.

Enter FALCONBRIDGE.

Fal. The foe advances: Jerſey is attack'd,
But Jerſey never will ſubmit to France.*
All Kent has yielded: London has received
Like a kind hoſt, the Dauphin and his pow'rs.
Your nobles would not hear you, but are gone
To offer ſervice to your enemy.
And wild amazement hurries up and down
The little number of your doubtful friends.

K. John. Would not the Lords return to me again,
When they had heard that Arthur was alive?

* The repeated attempts of the French on Jerſey during this reign, and the King's attention to the intereſts of the Iſland, which he frequently viſited, will, it is hoped, juſtify the Editor's partiality in the introduction of his native place. While the King appeared inattentive to the fate of Normandy, which he tamely ſuffered to be torn from his poſſeſſion, he was ſo ſtruck with the bravery and loyalty of the inhabitants of Jerſey and Guernſey, that he exerted all his ſtrength in their protection. It is a pleaſing taſk to enliven the gloom, which darkens the character of this Prince, by a ray of recorded liberality. Unſhackled by oppoſition, unawed by the threats of Rome, and unintimidated by the inſurrection of high-ſpirited Barons, he freely gave to the affection of thoſe Iſlands, what was extorted from him by the imperious demands of his Engliſh ſubjects,—a body of Conſtitutions, which have been the foundation of all their franchiſes and immunities. See FALLE's *Hiſtory of Jerſey*, 4to Edit. 1797, page 20, &c.

Fal. They found him dead, and caſt into the ſtreet;
An empty caſket, whence the jewel, life,
By ſome perfidious hand was ta'en away.

K. John. That villain Hubert ſaid he was alive.

Fal. So, on my ſoul, he was, for aught he knew.—
But wherefore do you droop? Why look you ſad?
Be great in act, as you have been in thought!
Let not the world ſee fear and ſad diſtruſt
Govern the motion of a kingly eye!
Be ſtirring as the time: be fire with fire:
Threaten the threat'ner; and outface the brow
Of bragging pride: ſo ſhall inferior eyes
That borrow their behaviour from the great,
Grow great by your example, and put on
The ſpirit of undaunted reſolution.
Away, and glitter like the God of War,
When he intends to animate the field!
Show boldneſs and aſpiring confidence.
What, ſhall they ſeek the lion in his den,
And fright him there, and make him tremble there?
O, let it not be ſaid! Forage and run,
To meet diſpleaſure farther from the doors,
And grapple with him, ere he come too nigh!

K. John. The Legate of the Pope, on my ſubmiſſion,

Has

Has promis'd to diſmiſs th' invading pow'rs
Led by the Dauphin.

Fal. O inglorious league!
Shall we, in the intrenchment of our land,
Make a baſe truce, a ſhameful compromiſe
With arms invaſive? Shall a beardleſs boy,
A cocker'd, ſilken wanton brave our fields,
And fleſh his ſpirit in a warlike ſoil,
Mocking the air with colors idly ſpread,
And find no check? Let us, my Liege, to arms!
Send forth your fleets*, to intercept the means
Of an extended war.

K. John. Thou, my fair couſin,
Shalt ſeek the Dauphin. If the Legate fail
To drive him back, and reconcile the Nobles,
Then lead my forces: I commit to thee
The honor of my Crown.

Fal. France may perſiſt
In her raſh enterpriſe. The faithleſs Barons
May ſwell the tide of danger. Fear them not.
'Spite of oppoſing hoſts, your fleets and armies
Will bear the fame of England thro' the world,
And ſerve their king to the laſt gaſp of life.

* King John proved that he underſtood the true policy of his country by his attention to the Navy. The frequent wars, in which he was engaged with France, taught him the neceſſity of ſtraining every nerve to obtain a naval ſuperiority. His great antagoniſt was by no means negligent of the means of attaining

SCENE II.

Prince Lewis's Camp.

Enter LEWIS, MELUN, SALISBURY, PEMBROKE *and* ESSEX.

Lewis. Thus far ſucceſs has crown'd our mutual hopes.
With ſhouts of joy the people hail our arms,
And

taining the ſame object. In order to increaſe his maritime power, Philip II is ſaid to have married the ſiſter of Canute V, King of Denmark, that he might obtain the uſe of the Daniſh fleet againſt that of England.

King John gave the moſt active encouragement to whatever had a tendency to the ſupport of maritime ſtrength, or the convenience and increaſe of trade. He granted more numerous and more beneficial charters to cities and boroughs than any of his predeceſſors, and effectually puniſhed all kinds of commercial fraud.

His anxiety to ſupport his naval ſuperiority is obſervable in the ordinances of Haſtings, A. D. 1200. which are recorded by SELDEN, (*Mare clauſum*, l. 11. c. 26.) It is there enacted, that if a naval commander, met with any veſſels, *nefs ou vaiſſeaulx*, the maſters of which ſhall refuſe to ſtrike their flags, *abaiſſer leurs triefs*, he ſhall conſider them as enemies, capture them, and ſeize their cargoes.

In conſequence of his attention to the natural ſtrength of England, King John received the moſt ſtriking proof of zealous attachment and of active ſervice from his ſailors, when he was abandoned by almoſt all his other ſubjects. It was in the moſt deſperate condition of his affairs on ſhore, that his fleet reduced the naval power of France, by a ſignal victory, to a ſtate bordering on total annihilation. See SPEED, CAMPBELL'S *Lives of the Admirals*, HENRY, &c.

And the fell tyrant totters on his throne.
Great Lords, in me you own your rightful king:
Your manly ſpirit, and the death of Arthur*
Secure my title to the Crown of England.
Your faithful vows are regiſter'd in heav'n.

Enter PANDULPH.

And there methinks an angel form appears!
The Legate comes with triumph in his eye,
To give us warrant from the hand of heav'n,
And on our actions ſet the name of right
With holy breath!

Pan. Hail noble Prince of France!
Fair peace and bloodleſs conqueſt crown this day!
King John has reconcil'd himſelf to Rome:
Then, Lewis, furl thy threat'ning colors up!
Tame the wild ſpirit of devouring war,
And lay it gently at the foot of peace!

Lewis. Your Grace ſhall pardon me, I will not back.
I am too high-born to be thus controul'd,
To be ſubſervient to another's ſtate.
Your breath firſt kindled the dead coal of war,
Between this humbled kingdom and myſelf.

You

* The following are the deſcendants of Henry II, as far as Henry III, including thoſe, who are mentioned, or concerned, in this play:

HENRY II.
RICHARD I.—Geoffrey.—Eleanor.—JOHN.
Arthur.—Blanch.—HENRY III.

You taught me firſt to know the face of right,
And fir'd my ſoul with this bold enterpriſe.
And come you now to tell me John has made
His peace with Rome! What is that peace to me?
I by the honor of my marriage-bed,
After the death of Arthur, claim this land.
And now it is half conquer'd, muſt I back
Becauſe John crouches to the Papal See?
Am I Rome's ſlave? What toil has Rome endur'd,
What men provided, what munition ſent,
T'invade this land? What but the pow'r of France,
Supports the danger and maintains the charge?
Have I not heard theſe iſlanders ſhout out
God ſave King Lewis*, as I paſſed their towns?
Does not this warlike band of Engliſh Peers
Flame in my van, and lead me on to conqueſt?

And

* Lewis was proclaimed King in London, and in ſeveral other places, by a conſiderable majority of the people. Hence the French hiſtorians have taken occaſion to aſſert that the Kings of France have as ſtrong a claim to the title of King of England as the latter have to that of King of France. See DANIEL, *Hiſtoire de France*, Vol. IV, page 241. They forget that Lewis was not King of France when he was called to take poſſeſſion of the crown of England: and it may be preſumed that, had he been King of England at the death of his father, the nobility and the people would have obliged him either to fix the ſeat of government in this country, or to abdicate the Crown. France has ſubmitted to an Engliſh Regent. England has placed the ſovereignty in the hands of a foreigner: England has received a conqueror; but by whatever means he had acquired his title, he has never tranſplanted the ſeat of empire to another country.

And ſhall I now refuſe the offer'd palm?
No, on my ſoul, it never ſhall be ſaid.

Pan. You look but on the outſide of this work.

Lewis. Outſide or inſide, I will not return,
Till this attempt ſhall realize the hopes,
The glorious hopes, you planted in my breaſt,
Before I drew this gallant head of war,
And cull'd theſe fiery ſpirits from the world,
To outlook conqueſt and to win renown,
Ev'n in the jaws of danger and of death.

Pan. This paſſion has its privilege: I go!—
But mark me, Lewis: thy attempt is vain!
The Engliſh pow'r is founded on a rock,
That bids defiance to the arms of France!

(Exit.

Lewis. Now gallant friends, ſpite of the threats of Rome
We will purſue our triumph!— *(Trumpet.*

Enter FALCONBRIDGE.

Fal. In the name
Of John, my Sov'reign, I demand an audience!
Say, has the Legate clos'd our bleeding wounds;
Or muſt we looſe again the dogs of war,
To tear the vitals of this panting land?

Lewis. Can I retreat when vict'ry calls me forth,
And beckons me to empire? Tell the Legate

I will

I will not temporize with his intreaties,
But free this country from a tyrant's ſcourge.
The arms of France ſhall drive away oppreſſion,
Spread equal privileges thro' the land,
And fix the rights of ſacred freedom there!
Come, gallant Falconbridge, and join our hoſts!
Come, come, and thou ſhalt thruſt thy hand as deep
Into the purſe of rich proſperity
As Lewis himſelf! So, Nobles, ſhall you all,
That knit your ſinews in this glorious cauſe.

Fal. France offer freedom! Was France ever free?
No, from the days of Cæſar to this hour,
France bow'd the neck beneath a maſter's ſway.
And ſhould the hapleſs time arrive, when France
Shall ſee the honors of her throne laid low,
Then ſhall her Nobles bleed, her temples blaze,
Her towns fall proſtrate, and her fields lie waſte;
Then grinning o'er her prey, fell anarchy
Shall arm her hundred tyrants with the ſcythe
Of deſolating rage; nor ſhall her people
E'er taſte of eaſe again, till happier times
Shall raiſe a lawful Monarch, and reſtore
The mild protection of her ancient laws!*—

Give

* The Royal government in France "is ſtronger than the laws themſelves: it has been engraved, not in marble or braſs, but in the hearts of the French nation." JEROME BIGNON.

Ad mores Natura RECURRET
Damnatos, fixa et mutari neſcia. JUV.

Give England freedom! Did ſhe ever ſtoop
To bondage unreveng'd, nor reaſſume
Her wonted fire? Did not invading Julius
Start at the form of Liberty, that frown'd
From Albion's tow'ring cliffs? Did not the Normans
Soon feel the ſacred flame*? And has not John
Seal'd the GREAT CHARTER of our liberties?
Bleſt with our rights, we urge no further claim.
The Engliſh laws are written in our hearts;
We will not change them†! May they laſt for ever!
The happineſs of thoſe, who feel their bleſſings,
The admiration of the envying world!—
And you degen'rate, you ingrate revolters!
You bloody Neroes, ripping up the womb
Of your dear mother England, bluſh for ſhame!
For know, our gallant Monarch is in arms,
And like an eagle o'er his aery tow'rs,
To ſouſe th' annoyance, that invades his neſt!
The weaver leaves his loom, the ſwain his fields,
To join the ranks of gen'rous loyalty!
E'en ſtriplings catch the martial influence,
And change their toys to arms, their ſports to marches;
While your own ladies and pale viſag'd maids,
Like Amazons, come tripping after drums,

* The Engliſh were conſiderably relieved from the ſyſtematic oppreſſion of the two firſt Williams by the Charters of Henry I, Stephen and Henry II, and by the Conſtitutions of Clarendon.

† NOLUMUS LEGES ANGLIÆ MUTARI!

Their thimbles into armed gauntlets change,
Needles to lances, and their gentle hearts
To active zeal and fiery indignation!

Lewis. There end thy boaſt, and turn thy face in peace!
Strike up the drum, and let the tongue of war
Defend the cauſe of Lewis or of John!

Fal. Decide we thus our fortune! do but ſtart
An echo with the clamor of thy drum,
As loud a drum ſhall ſtrike the welkin's ear,
And mock the deep-mouth'd thunder; for at hand
Is warlike John, and in his forehead ſits
A bare-ribb'd death, whoſe office is this day,
To feaſt upon whole thouſands of the French.

Lewis. Reſerve theſe proud boaſts for the field of war.
I bear a heart, that knows not how to fear*!

(Exeunt.

SCENE III.

A Field of Battle.

Enter KING JOHN *and* HUBERT.

Hubert. My Liege, th' embattled foe moves boldly on.

This

* Lewis VIII was ſurnamed *Cœur de Lion.*

This bloody day decides the fate of England.—
Your looks are faint! how fares your Majeſty?

K. John. A tyrant fever, harbinger of death,
Heavy and ſlow, conſumes my feeble frame,
And will not ſuffer me to brave the danger!
Commend me to my couſin Falconbridge,
On him and thee my deareſt hopes depend.—
O would my Nobles but return to me!

Hubert. Fear not, my Liege: a thouſand hearts as brave
Start into action to defend your cauſe!
Let me conduct your Highneſs from the field.

(Exeunt.

SCENE IV.

Another Part of the Field.

Enter SALISBURY, PEMBROKE *and* ESSEX.

Saliſ. I did not think the King ſo ſtor'd with friends.

Eſſex. Try once again the fortune of the day!
Courage, my friends! throw ſpirit in the French;
For their defeat is death to all our hopes.

Enter MELUN, *led in wounded.*

Melun. O lead me, lead to the revolted Barons!

Eſſex. When we were happy, we had other names.

Melun.

Melun. Fly noble Engliſh! you are bought
and ſold.
Untread the rude path of rebellion,
And welcome home again diſcarded faith.
Seek out King John, and fall before his feet:
For if the Prince's arms are crown'd with conqueſt,
He means to recompenſe your ſervices
By ſeizing your eſtates*! thus hath he ſworn,
Ev'n

* Lewis made ſome of his Countrymen governors of the forts, which he had taken, and confiſcated in their favor the eſtates of ſome of his opponents. His conduct, however dictated by prudence, or commanded by neceſſity, produced in the minds of the Engliſh effects injurious to his intereſts, and was ſufficient to cool the zeal of the Barons in his cauſe. The report of his intentions to ſeize all their eſtates was probably an artifice of the partizans of John. Had he really formed ſuch a deſign, it would have been extremely impolitic to diſcover it to ſo many perſons. The poſſeſſion of the kingdom would have given him ſufficient means to reward his followers, without an act of the blackeſt ingratitude to thoſe, by whoſe aſſiſtance only he landed in the Iſland. But the character of Lewis VIII, eſtimated with a proper regard to the religious principles of thoſe times, will not permit the unprejudiced Hiſtorian to credit ſuch a report. As a warriour, he was brave and generous; as a King, he obtained the love and confidence of his people; as a man, he was juſt and pious. That he ſacrificed his life to the preſervation of his chaſtity is a fact aſſerted by the French Hiſtorians on evidence, which is not completely invalidated by Voltaire, in his *Eſſai ſur les Mœurs*, (*Œuvres*, Tome xvii, 8vo. 1785.)

The report, however, was naturally ſeized by the Poet, who has added a circumſtance, which increaſes the improbability of the fact:

—If the French be Lords of this loud day,
He means to recompenſe the pains you take,
By cutting off your heads!

Cibber

Ev'n on that altar, where he ſwore to you
Dear amity and everlaſting love.

Eſſex. Can this be true? Can this be poſſible?

Melun. Have I not hideous death within my view!
See my blood flowing faſt, and my faint life
Melting away, ev'n as a form of wax
Diſſolving at the fire! do not miſtruſt me.
What in the world ſhould make me now deceive,
Since I muſt loſe the fruit of all deceit?—
My eyes grow dim:—the awful call of death,
That thunders horror to my cloſing ear,
Awakes my conſcience, to reveal this oath,
In which my hand was join'd.—O pardon this,
This expiated fault!—and bear me hence,—
Far from the noiſe—and tumult—of the field,—
Where I may breathe—my lateſt ſigh—in peace,—
Imploring—mercy—from the hand—of Heaven!—

Pem. We will conduct his ſteps in ſafety:—ſee,
The cruel pangs of death diſtort his eye!
O let us make our profit of his faith,
Protect

Cibber has here followed the plan of Shakeſpeare; but varied the cauſe of the determination of Lewis:

Know then this Dauphin hearing you had bound
Your ſwords, by private oaths, never to yield
Your crown, or e'en a province of your England, to
The claims of France; this ſo inflam'd his rage,
That he did ſecretly make after-oath,
That when his arms ſhould have ſubdu'd King John,
Your heads ſhould be the victims of his right
Refus'd!

Protect ourſelves, and on this fair occaſion
March to the King, accept his proffer'd peace,
And with allegiance heal our civil wounds!

(Exeunt, leading off Mel.

SCENE V.

The French Camp.

Enter LEWIS *and* OFFICERS.

Lewis. The ſun of Heav'n, methought, was loth to ſet,
But ſtaid, and made the weſtern welkin bluſh,
When victory hung doubtful o'er our heads,
Mocking our toils.——

Enter MESSENGER.

How now, my friend, what news?

Meſ. The count Melun is ſlain: the Engliſh Lords,
By his perſuaſion, are again fall'n off.
Your formidable fleet, beneath whoſe weight
The Ocean groan'd, as with ſuperior force
They proudly ſail'd, are by the foe defeated.
Scarce have a few regain'd the ſhores of France.*

Lewis.

* This alludes to a naval victory obtained by an Engliſh fleet, conſiſting of forty ſhips, under the command of Philip d'Aubigny and John Marſhall, over a French fleet of eighty ſhips, commanded

Lewis. Vain is the conteſt with an Engliſh fleet!—
England ſtill ſhines the miſtreſs of the main!—
Well, on the land our fate ſhall be decided.
Then keep good quarter, and good watch to-night;
The day ſhall not be up ſo ſoon as I,
To try the fair adventure of to-morrow. *(Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.

An Orchard in Swinſtead Abbey.

Enter SALISBURY *and* ESSEX.

Saliſ. What news, my Lord? How fares his Majeſty?

Eſſex.

manded by the Monk Euſtace, whoſe object was to convey a conſiderable reinforcement to Prince Lewis. This engagement took place in 1216, according to Mezerai, *Abrégé Chronologique de l'Hiſtoire de France*, Tome II.

Another triumph, of ſtill greater importance, adorned the naval annals of the reign of King John, in 1213. Five hundred ſhips, commanded by the Earl of Saliſbury, defeated ſeven hundred of the French off the port of Damme, on the coaſt of Flanders, ſinking one hundred, taking three hundred, and diſperſing the reſt.

The introduction of a naval victory in this Play was a pleaſure, which the Editor could not reſiſt. His gratification was ſtrongly increaſed by the feelings of an audience, whoſe burſts of applauſe, at the exclamation of the dejected Lewis, expreſſed the animating recollection of the recent victories of HOWE, St. VINCENT, DUNCAN and NELSON.

Eſſex. Poiſon'd, I fear. The life of all his blood
Is touch'd corruptibly, and his poor brain,
By the disjointed comments that it makes,
Foretells its mortal office is expiring.

Enter PEMBROKE.

Pem. His Majeſty yet ſpeaks, and holds belief,
That were he brought into the open air,
It would aſſuage the burning poiſon's force.

(K. JOHN *brought in, attended by* HUBERT, *&c.*

K. John. Ay, marry, now my ſoul has room to breathe.—
There is ſo hot a ſummer in my boſom,
That my heart burns, and crumbles into duſt.

Eſſex. How fares your Grace?

K. John. Forſaken!—poiſon'd,—dead!—
And none of you will bid the winter come,
And thruſt his icy fingers in my breaſt!—
Or let my kingdom's rivers take their courſe
Thro' my burnt boſom:—or intreat the North
To make his bleak winds kiſs my parching lips,
And comfort me with cold!—I aſk not much:—
I beg cold comfort;—and you are ſo ſtrait,—
And ſo ungrateful,—you deny me that!—

Hubert. O that there were ſome virtue in my tears,
That might relieve you!

K. John.

K. John. No:—their ſalt is hot!—
Within me is a hell;—and there the poiſon—
Is as a fiend,—confin'd to tyrannize—
On blood—condemn'd—and irreprievable.—
O,—if my penitence—

Pem. As you forgave us,
May Heav'n extend its mercy to your ſoul!

K. John. My eyes are dim.—The tackle of my heart—
Is crack'd—and burnt!—O mercy,—mercy,—
Heav'n! *(dies.*

Enter FALCONBRIDGE.

Fal. My fears are true:—good tidings come too late!
Clos'd is the heart, that ſhould receive the comfort.

Hubert. His ear is ſhut!—but now a king, now thus!

Pem. O Falconbridge, if thou canſt ſoothe our ſorrows,
Impart the news.

Fal. The ruin of his fleet,
And the diſperſion of the promis'd ſuccours,
Awak'd Prince Lewis from his dream of conqueſt;
And when he heard the Barons had diſclaim'd him,
He ſeal'd his friendſhip by ſuch terms of peace,
As we with honor and reſpect may take.

Hubert. Now, now, you ſtars, that move in
your bright ſpheres,
Exert your pow'rs, and ſhew your mended faiths,
To drive for ever from this reſcu'd land
The wild deſtruction of invading war!
And may the dangers, which kind Heav'n averts,
By civil diſcord never be recall'd!

Fal. O never let diſſenſion mar our peace!
For England never did, and never ſhall,
Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror,
But when internal diſcord gave the wound.—
Come the three corners of the world in arms,
No foreign force this country ſhall ſubdue,
While King and Subjects to themſelves are true!

(They place themſelves in attitudes of mourning over the body of the King, while the curtain ſlowly deſcends to plaintive muſic.)

FINIS.

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EPILOGUE,

Spoken by Meſſrs. CHARRETIE and JOY.

MR. CHARRETIE.

"OUR play thus o'er, does not ſome eager breaſt
Beat with impatience of the coming jeſt?"
Ev'n flirting fans, and nods and ſmiles declare
The expectation of the gentle fair.
While ſome old Don, with grave and ſolemn mien,
Cries out: "No laughter ſhould deface this ſcene.
'Tis moſt abſurd, nay 'tis a downright folly
To ſmooth the brow of godlike Melancholy!"
But let old grey beards ſhake their heads at leiſure,
Still unconfin'd, I aim at wit and pleaſure.—
To damp my joys with jargon of the ſchools;
And hopes of ſomething,—the reward of fools!—
Learning they call it; pretty name I own;
But jokes and humor better pleaſe the town.—
I'm ſure you pity my deteſted lot,
To be thus haraſs'd with—the Deuce knows what,—
Plagu'd with tenſe, gender, mood,—condemn'd to hammer
At the diſguſting rules of ſtupid grammar!
To bluſter "*tov d' apameibomenos:*"—
Oh frightful ſounds! words ever ominous
Of murder, treaſon, and their ghaſtly train,
Which ſplit the tongue, and terrify the brain!—
Nor is this all;—'twere well if 'twere no worſe—
October comes, why then, we muſt rehearſe.
The manager then iſſues his commands:
"Thus keep your legs, thus figure out your hands!
"Don't ſpeak ſo faſt! attend to what I ſay!
"Speak more diſtinctly, or you'll ſpoil the play;
"Now ſtart, now frown, you come in at that door!
"No, that won't do, you two muſt walk before!"—
With ſuch unmeaning words, with nonſenſe fraught,
As if ev'n nature could be learnt and taught!—
Still I could ſuffer to be peſter'd thus
With barb'rous ranting and theatric fuſs,

Did

EPILOGUE.

Did but a glimpſe of pleaſure ſoothe this pain,
Or were this jargon of the comic ſtrain,
But ſwords and battles, and whole heaps of dead,
(Ah! who could bear to ſee poor AUSTRIA's head!)
Beſtrew the ſtage:—and what a ſtrange attire!
This very ev'ning my poor train caught fire!
Still Falconbridge ſupplied the loſs of glee;
Only I wiſh'd the fun had been for me;
For fun was all the glory that I aim'd at,
My part was'nt fun, therefore you ſaw I maim'd it.—
Pleaſure I love, and ſearch the world around,
In ev'ry ſtation pleaſure will be found:
All, all agree to own its ſov'reign ſway;
The great, the poor, to pleaſure homage pay.
Whate'er to my lov'd humor umbrage bears,
That I deteſt!——

MR. JOY, *entering.*

What words aſſail my ears!
What ſounds are thoſe, that thus intruſive ſport
In theſe fair domes, where ſcience keeps her court;
Where the bright leader of the Aonian choir
Inflames his youthful ſons with riſing fire!
'Tis Education, that in prime of youth,
Points out the paths of wiſdom and of truth.
'Tis Education rears the tender mind,
Soſtens the manners, and adorns mankind.
Then why this ſcorn of Learning? Whence this love
Of Pleaſure, that awhile will grateful prove,
Then ſhrink appall'd, and mingle with the wind,
Leaving a monument of ſhame behind?——
Far other raptures warm his breaſt ſerene,
Who turns indignant from the loathſome ſcene,
And mounts the heights of Helicon, to gain
The nobleſt treaſures of the Muſes' train.——
To fire our youthful boſoms, and diſpenſe
The genuine ſtores of modeſt eloquence:
Whether the bar ſhall claim, in Virtue's cauſe,
Our manly vigor to maintain the laws;

Or

EPILOGUE.

Or if our country point our zealous force
To ſtop, in public ſphere, Corruption's courſe,
To teach her factious children to unite
Her Sov'reign's glory with the people's right;
Or if celeſtial influence prompt our heart
Religious truths with rapture to impart,
To bid the Sinner kiſs Affliction's rod,
The Friends of Man, the Miniſters of God:
For this intent was form'd this claſſic ſtage,
That deals inſtruction to the riſing age.——
Ceaſe then to ſcoff at Eloquence, that draws
The willing tribute of deſerv'd applauſe!

MR. CHARRETIE.

Muſt then the droſs of drowſy melancholy,
The murky gloom of ſpleen, of care, and folly,
Brood o'er the ſoul, and pleaſure leave the field
To all the cares, that Fame and Science yield?

MR. JOY.

Far be the thought! no, learning has a pauſe,
That yields to Pleaſure's, as to Nature's laws.
Far be the thought to pore o'er conſtant knowledge,
Immur'd within the cells of ſchool or college!—
Science and pleaſure, hand in hand combin'd,
Still win the fancy, and improve the mind.

MR. CHARRETIE.

If ſcience thus with pleaſure can unite,
In Learning's lap I plunge with full delight!

MR. JOY.

Thus o'er our heads inſtruction rears her wand,
Improves and pleaſes with a varying hand.—
If you but ſmile, and on our labors ſhed
The balm of praiſe, by ſatisfaction led,
Theſe buds of Science and of Fame ſhall bloom,
And o'er our efforts pour a ſweet perfume;
Her willing Enſigns kind applauſe ſhall wave,
And OXFORD weave the wreath, which READING gave!

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